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SUMTER'S SCOUTS;

OR,

THE RIDERS OF THE CATAWBA.

A ROMANCE OF THE REVOLUTION.

BY C. DUNNING CLARK.

AUTHOR OF THE FOLLOWING DIME NOVELS:

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SUMTER'S SCOUTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SCOUTS.

IN the spring of the year 17—, two men were lying under the trees upon the banks of a southern river, watching the motions of a party of tories on the other bank. These men were conversing in low tones, and apparently waiting for a certain hour when they could begin their work.

The first was a tall young man in the dress of a partisan on the whig side, wearing the stripes of an orderly. His form was muscular, and eminently fitted for the varying fortunes of war. His face was such a one as wins friends involuntarily, open and manly, smiling in repose, but hard and stern when in battle. Such a face as man (and woman, too) loves to look upon. A heavy rifle lay by his side, of the pattern of those days, nearly five feet in height, with a bore of very small dimensions. Though by far inferior to the weapons of our day, it was the best style of weapon made in his times, and he was an adept in its use. In addition to this, he wore a heavy knife curved like a Malay creese. His face was clean shaved, with the exception of a heavy mustache, with which army officers conspire with each other to make themselves appear "ferocious."

His companion was an Indian of the Choctaw nation, a lithe, active looking fellow, somewhere about the age of thirty, though an Indian's age is always uncertain, even to advanced years. He was armed like his companion in most respects, but scorned the use of the "short guns," which showed themselves in the breast-pockets of the young partisan. Their place was filled by a heavy hatchet, which he knew well how to use. His face was prepossessing, and he had the reputation in the American army of being a faithful and efficient scout. He lay with his eyes half closed, indolently watching the

motions of their enemies upon the other bank of the river. That river was the Catawba, and the period, that time in the war of the Revolution when the British were opposed only by the partisans of Marion, Sumter, Singleton, and men of that stamp, who lurked in the deep fastnesses of the swamps, and sought in every way to trouble the foe; who cut off supplies, and destroyed small bands of tories; who pounced upon exposed posts. Their arms were of the most rude description, few, except the officers, having any of the superior kind worn by the young orderly. It was not until they had taken arms from the enemy, that they were able to fight in a proper manner. Up to that time, the mills gave up their saws to be made into broadswords for the troopers, and the women cheerfully melted their pewter dishes into bullets. The mountains furnished niter, which, with the charcoal burned upon their hearths, furnished material for powder. Much as the British affected to despise the enemy, and their species of warfare, they soon admitted their prowess, for their foraging parties dared not leave the fortified posts, and the main armies.

"Those fellows are working like beavers," said the orderly, addressing his dusky friend.

"What say, Joe?" said the Indian.

"They are working hard, over there, I said," repeated the white man.

"'Course dey workin'. S'pose de Gin'ral mek dey run out ob dat, eh?" said the Indian.

"Before long," replied the other. "These Catawba tories shall know that the 'Game Cock' is not asleep, the scoundrels! He only waits for our report, Jim. If the scouts of the army were all like us, they would do their work cheerfully, for the good of the cause. We do ours for poor pay, but what of that? When the country is free, we shall get our pay, no doubt. And if we don't, it does not matter much. We can bear a little loss, for we have strong hearts and stout arms, and can easily make a living. I am sure we do it now, and if the Catawba country can give us a living now, it can when we have peace, and the deer can come to the licks again."

"Dat's so! My fader was a war-chief of the Choctaw

nation, and he hated the English. Me hate dem too. He tell me to smoke pipe wid 'Mericans, and fight for dem, and me do it."

"If we are caught, Jim, it will be short shrift and a sudden cord with us. The tories of the Catawba do not know what mercy means."

"What you mean by dat, eh?"

"I mean that we shall be hanged if we are taken."

"S'pose so," said Jim Lane. "Dat's right. Mus' tek care not to get caught. If dey catch we, we die, all good. Warrior mus' die some time; if die now, go to happy hunting-ground all de sooner. If no be catched, den General t'ink all de more ob us."

"We must swim the river at dark."

"Easy 'nough to do dat. Swim farder dan dat, good many time, jest for fun."

"As it is getting darker now, let us go into the bushes and get ready," said the man called Joe. The two went deeper into the woods, to escape the possibility of observation on the part of those on the other bank. Here they threw off their heavier accouterments, and screwed up their precious ammunition-flasks more firmly. They had no need of any superfluous clothing. When their preparations were completed, it was dark, and they went down to the bank.

They had many a desperate deed to do, many a hair-breadth escape, before they could hope to tread that bank again.

"Are you ready, Jim?" asked the orderly, turning to his companion.

"Ready!" was the sententious reply. The fires of the camp on the other side were lighted, and threw broad belts of light across the river in various places. All at once the roll of a drum came to their ears from the camp.

"Changing guard," said Joe, in a low tone. "Now is our time."

Each of the daring men found a small log upon the shore, upon which they strapped their rifles, and pushed off into the stream. It was a short swim to the other bank, and was soon done, and they lay under the shadow of the tall ferns, where they remained quiet, listening to the tread of the guard

upon the bank above them. Just then he challenged some new comers, and brought them to a stand.

"Who goes there?"

"Guard relief, with the countersign."

"Advance one man, and give the countersign."

"Tarleton!"

"The countersign is correct. Advance."

The relief came forward, and the new guard took his place, when he received a piece of advice from the corporal of the guard.

"Keep a right smart look out, Ben, for these scouts of Sumter are as sharp as lynxes, and beat us all on a cold scent. Any how, I know two that our captain would give a good sum in good gold guineas to get his hands on. I mean that durned Indian, Jim Lane, and his comrade, Joe Barnes. They give us trouble enough, crawlin' round yer in their sneakin' moccasins."

"Let me ever git my eyes on 'em once, and they've scouted their last scout," said the guard, valorously, little knowing that the very men he so much desired to see, were lying under the ferns, not ten feet away. Joe squeezed the arm of his Indian friend, as much as to say that listeners heard very little good of themselves. The Indian looked up with a grin upon his swarthy face.

They heard the steps of the guard relief as they marched away; then stillness fell upon the place, save the steps of the sentry upon his lonesome beat. The two adventurers peeped cautiously out and saw him by the light of the camp-fire. Both knew him as the most bloodthirsty tory in the Catawba district. They had an old grudge against him; he had murdered, in cold blood, a dear friend and fellow scout, when he lay wounded, after a hard battle. Jim drew his hatchet, still under cover of the ferns, with an expression that boded no good to the guard. Then he pushed out into the stream, and Joe heard no more of him for half an hour. He did not move, for he had confidence in the Choctaw's sagacity. He knew that the fate of the man was sealed, and yet he had no pity for him.

The southern whigs and tories of '77 were made of even more relentless stuff than those of the north, and believed in

the old Jewish faith, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." "Blood for blood," was their motto, and he knew that this wretch had forfeited all claim to life, even if he had not stood in the way of their present enterprise.

At the end of half an hour the young man heard the sentry challenge, and the low voice of Jim giving the countersign. Then came a sudden bound, the dull "thud" of the tomahawk as it struck the skull, smiting through to the brain. Joe rose from his covert and found the Indian bending over a prostrate body.

"He is dead," said the Indian. "Leave him here, eh?"

"Yes; let him rot! Thus he left the body of poor Archie Carroll on the field at Waxhaw," said Joe Barnes, sternly.

"Good! What do now, eh?" questioned Jim.

"I shall change coats with this fellow. It is the first time I ever wore the green coat of Dacy's tories. I think I shall act the part well. See to it that you do not speak; I will answer the challenges."

They stripped the dead tory of his gay green coat, and it soon adorned the body of the orderly.

"'Tain't so natural to me," he muttered, "but it's safer. Jim, you take the fellow's blouse. When you are among the Romans, do as the Romans do. It would not be pretty to be found wearing an enemy's coat; bad for the coat and bad for Joe Barnes, for the *con-demned* tories would confiscate the coat and hang Joe, which is entirely against that young gentleman's ideas of what is right and proper. Now, Jim, remember who we are; we are just come in from a scout. Put on the blouse; I don't want you nabbed at your time of life; I should not know what to do without you."

"Dey ain't got me," said Jim, with a snort of disgust. "You gwine to go to de camp? Who they be?"

"Tarleton is here, and so is Dacy with his riders."

"Know Dacy?"

"I've seen him once or twice, and a right handsome chap he is, and sits a horse like a prince. I tell you it cuts me that a southern man, bred on the soil, should join the invaders. I used to know the Dacys when I was a gentleman myself."

"Not gentleman now?"

"A mighty poor one. The little I possess is in the hands

of the English. It is down near Orangeburg that my property lies. The beauty of it is, they don't care to burn the old house, and the plantation they can't carry away; so that if we win, and things look hard now, the property is safe, and if we lose, it isn't much."

"You know Dacy? P'raps he know you."

"I'm not afraid. Hark! into the ferns quick, for your life, Jim. Take the blouse, it won't do to leave any thing here. This is Dacy's command."

The two plunged into the ferns just in time to escape a body of horsemen, who swept down to the ford. It was indeed the band of Dacy, famous in its time, in all the regions about the Catawba; a terror to all the whigs of that region, whom they pursued with remorseless cruelty. The leader was a young man, so report said, but emulated the example of the cruel Tarleton, whom he often accompanied in his expeditions. They were now on a raid into the upper country.

"Go on," chuckled Joe; "nobody will see you; but if you don't meet the 'Game Cock' before you get to the high hills, I lose my guess. Perhaps I did not put him up to this little move! If you don't come back with fewer horses than you take out, I am mistaken."

The last horse had disappeared among the bushes on the other bank when the scouts came from their hiding-places and advanced toward the camp-fires, which they could see just before them. They wished to get in the rear of the troops of Tarleton, and find out the condition and purposes of the enemy on the whigs in that district.

The password acted like a charm. Sentry after sentry was passed, and they reached the camp-fire, around which a number of men were grouped, in the dress of the partisan assistant of the British. The troop to which the dead guard belonged having gone, they had no fear, and Joe knew exactly what to say and do. It was a part of another tory command, luckily from the upper country, entire strangers to the command of Dacy. Barnes entered into conversation with the men, using the peculiar dialect of the lower class of whites of South Carolina.

"Whar ye gwine at, stranger?" asked one, looking curiously

"Dacy's ; been out on a little scout, I reckon."

"Been out long ?"

"Four days."

"Been fur ?"

"Right smart twel' mile, I reckon."

"Whar ye gwine at now ?"

"Can't find my troop. I reckoned it would be hyer when I came back. I'll tell ye how it was. I got into the upper country and it is as full of whigs as the swamps are of suckers, so I had to be mighty keerful. Some of Sumter's men got arter me, and give me a chase, durn their hides ! I lost my horse and had to take to the swamps, I did."

"That's bad," said the questioner. "Hosses are hard to git in this yer kentry, now. Time was when a man could git a hoss mighty easy ; but he can't do it now, durned ef he kin. But don't you know your troop has gone ?"

"Gone ! Oh, catamounts ! and here I've got a recruit."

"Hev you ? Whar's he from ?"

"He is an Injan. I picked him up in the high hill kentry, and as he were spilin' for a fight, and warn't no ways particular whar he did it, I jest gin him my blouse and brought him along. Don't speak to him ; he won't talk."

"Can't talk, eh ? How did you make him understand you then ?"

"Oh, I've been in the Choctaw nation before the war, and know the language. Ain't there none of our fellers left ?"

"Not a man. Dacy took up his sentries as he went out. Whar will you go ?"

Before the scout could answer, another man was added to the group. He was a short, dark man, in the dress of the British cavalry service, and was in fact no other than Tarleton, a man who did more to deepen the intense hatred of the British in the South than any other. From the first, his had been a mission of fire and sword. He did not believe in clemency, and exterminated the whigs whom he caught with arms in their hands, without mercy, until "Tarleton's Quarters" became a word of reproach in the southern district, and was the cry of the incensed whigs, when in battle with the Tories. Tarleton said something in a low tone to one of the

sergeants near the camp-fire. Receiving his answer, he approached Barnes.

"Where were you from?" he said, sharply, never moving his eyes from the face of the spy.

"Dacy's Riders," replied Joe, boldly.

"Ah! then perhaps you can tell me the name of your sergeant; your orderly, I mean."

By great good luck that officer had been raised in the country near Orangeburg and was a well-known character among the whigs, though Tarleton was not aware of it. The scout answered promptly,

"John Davidson."

"Right," said Tarleton. "Then perhaps you will tell me why you wear a pair of buckskin leggins, under your trooper's boots?"

In his haste, Joe had not thought of this any more than he had of the possibility of meeting Tarleton, whom, in common with the whigs, he cordially hated. He saw at a glance that he was suspected. He looked at Jim, who stood with his head bowed in silent apathy, but it was assumed, for he had loosened his knife and tomahawk, ready for fight if the time came. Joe looked at Tarleton; a frown, black as night, came upon the face of that officer, who was not accustomed to wait for an answer.

"Speak, fellow!" cried he, "answer my question; no prevarication! If you are ~~one~~ Dacy's men, why are you accoutered in that fashion?"

Joe hesitated and turned his head. About ten yards away he saw the outlines of the wood. If they could only get to it they might be safe.

"Your answer!" repeated Tarleton.

"For want of a better—that!" shouted the spy, striking the officer a tremendous blow with his fist, which levelled him in the dust. "Into the woods, Jim! Kill any man who stays you!"

Jim had been waiting; he saw the body of his companion rise into the air, and fly over the heads of his enemies, with an agile spring. They, enraged by the transaction, had no time to raise a hand before the daring fellow was gone. Jim Lane's tomahawk was in his hand. A single man tried to

stay him. It was the worst thing he ever did. Joe Barnes, who had gained the edge of the woods, looked back and caught the glitter of the polished steel. A second after came the blow, the death-cry of the tory, and the Indian bounded over the prostrate body, shaking his hatchet in the air. Half a dozen pistol-shots followed the adventurous couple into the woods, and angry cries rose on every side. But the swamp was before the spies and into it they plunged, followed by the execrations of their enemies, who had just raised their fallen chief.

Tarleton never forgot nor forgave that blow, but before he recovered sufficiently to give orders, the object of his wrath was gone, buried in the depths of the swamp, from which they could only be driven by great efforts, for they were of the forest; they loved it; their first breaths had been drawn therein; the boughs of the old trees had been their shelter; they had gone to rest there at night, careless and happy, and the deer was hardly more fleet-footed than they! They ran on in silence, leaping from hummock to hummock, until a hoarse howl came sounding through the deep arches.

"Hark!" cried Joe; "what is that?" grasping the Indian's arm. "Do you hear it?"

The Indian paused and listened, and then they knew the sound. It was the deep bay of the bloodhound. The scout set his teeth hard. To be hunted with hounds! It galled him to the quick.

"Curses light upon them!" he muttered; "do they dare to hunt me down with dogs? That is the work of the cursed tories. I know that dog, too; it is Dacy's. If he presses me hard he will lose his life.

"What do now, Joe?" asked the Indian.

"I am going to muzzle that dog," answered Joe. "It won't do for us to have him following us. I know the breed, and it is very hard to buck against; but I am not afraid of him."

"Why Dacy leave him?"

"I don't know. He always goes with the troop and takes those whom they hunt down. They say he hates a whig worse than his master. Perhaps Tarleton has taken a fancy to him, and kept him in camp. I fancy Dacy will

look for him in vain when he returns. Hear the black beast howl."

"I hear 'im," shouted Jim. "Look out! 'Ere he be!"

As he spoke, a huge, broad-breasted, tawny-lidded beast came leaping down the path, giving vent to a savage howl as he caught sight of the fugitives. The young man had wrapped his coat around his left arm in thick folds, which he held as a shield to guard his throat. The huge beast, crouching like a lion, waited a single moment and then sprang! Joe stood quietly, waiting for his coming, grasping his huge knife. He shook the guarded arm at the crawling beast, which answered by a still fiercer cry as his teeth met each other in the tough cloth. Then, with the vindictive energy peculiar to his race, he shook the sturdy arm with his iron claws. That movement exposed his broad chest, and the weapon glittered like a beam of light descending with all the force of that strong arm. It pierced the breast of the dog; the blood spouted out in a crimson stream, dyeing the clothing of the victor. The eyes grew dim, the grasp upon the cloth relaxed, and the hound rolled over on his side, dead!

"Now, I hope you are satisfied," said Joe, shaking off the grasp of the slain beast. "I have no doubt you were a very useful animal in your day, none more so, and helped your master; and if your master has any more such dogs, I hope he will put them to a better use than hunting down white men. Come on, Jim; I hear the knaves howl after, as if the trail were hot. We will try and make it cold, from this time. The rascals would like to have the hanging of Joe Barnes, but I think the time is not yet."

"Where we go?"

"Wait. Those fellows are coming close. I hope for the good of the animal creation that they have no more dogs."

He was right. A great clamor was breaking out behind them. They heard the voice of Farleton ringing out above the rest.

"Those moccasins," said Joe, pulling off his boots as he spoke.

The Indian understood him, and drew from the pocket of his blouse a pair of moccasins like his own, fancifully wrought with beads. The squaw betrothed to Jim had worked these

moccasins, and he valued them highly; no mortal living would have been able to obtain them, except Joe Barnes.

To a spy, these moccasins are more than necessary. He should always wear them. The hard sole of a boot, or of the seven-by-fourteen regulation mud-crusher, is a bad thing for the woods. Every stick that breaks, adds so much to the danger of the spy. The boot or shoe is unyielding, and must break them, while the pliable moccasin, bending over the object, warns the scout of its presence. For this reason these men always wore them on a scout.

Joe stood irresolute a moment, still holding the boots in his hand.

"Shall I give aid and comfort to the enemy, or shall I destroy that lovely pair of boots? Now, if I thought the Tories would crib them, I'd cut them into inch strips. Then I think perhaps there are some lonely conscripts in that band, and *they* might get them. I've done something toward giving them shoes, for I've left them a dog-skin; whether they will appreciate that favor or not I can't say. We can't wait to think. Lie there, boots, for luck. Come, Jim, they are close upon us run for your life!"

CHAPTER II.

THE MEN IN THE WALL.

CAPTAIN LIONEL DACY came back next day from his trip to the upper country, with many empty saddles. In fact he found Sumter in the path, and had a lively skirmish. If it had not been that Sumter thought that Tarleton's entire command backed Dacy, it is extremely probable that the celebrated Riders would never have seen their homes again. When Dacy came into camp he was exceedingly angry. The "squeamishers," of whom his command was composed, hurried out of his way with a degree of celerity quite marvelous. They jumped to obey his commands very much in the manner of men impelled by the application of hot irons to their persons.

If Captain Dacy ever was angry in his life, his anger was nothing compared to that which he felt when he came back to find the dead body of his hound. He loved the fierce brute, strange as it may seem. There was something very similar in their natures; both were cruel and bloodthirsty to the last degree. Tarleton had gone off in hot haste, during the last night, in pursuit of a band of whigs. Dacy sent a messenger to him, asking permission to go in search of the spies, and pitched a camp beside the slain brute to wait the return of the messenger. He told his superior that his men were born swamp-suckers, and it would go hard with the spies when once they struck the trail.

The messenger came in and found that Dacy was making himself comfortable for the night at the root of a great cotton-wood tree, blown down in the last wind. Tarleton gave him full permission to employ his men in the service mentioned. It was necessary that the two whig emissaries should be caught and made an example of. The Indian who killed the man in the camp was one of the most notorious of Sumter's scouts, and the white man was equally to be feared. The colonel concluded by offering to the man who was first to lay hands upon Joe Barnes, two hundred guineas, and for Jim Lane one hundred guineas. No one but the swamp-suckers who saw the blow which Joe dealt Tarleton, knew why he valued the white man highest. The messenger smacked his lips as he mentioned the money. Gold was rare enough then among the rough riders on the border to excite their cupidity when any service would secure it.

"And Tarleton says," added the fellow, "that you are to follow them until you have taken them or are sure they are off."

"Good!" said Dacy. "If they escape us they have long legs. Did you go to Lieutenant Birdsall's and get the package as I ordered you?"

The messenger produced a small brown paper parcel which Dacy proceeded to untie, and found a small picture, painted on ivory, of a handsome girl, with laughing black eyes and delicate complexion. He looked at it earnestly, and the hard lines upon his face softened as he murmured to himself.—

"If she had loved me better, I should not be the man I am."

As he spoke, he laid the picture behind him on the log, when it rolled off from the tree body into the cavity at its roots below. It was very unlucky that it should have fallen in that place, since it brought about an awkward *contretemps* directly. The spies had not fled far. They knew that their enemies could not follow them far in the darkness of the night, and as soon as the Riders had bivouacked, they came back, and with their accustomed hardihood began to pry about the camp. Their purpose was to get information at all hazards.

By some chance they found the empty space beneath the root, and they were soon comfortably settled upon the dried leaves at the bottom. Boring holes with their knives in the interstices of the roots, they peeped out upon the rebel camp.

They hailed the coming of the two men with joy, were satisfied with what they said, and waited for more, when the unlucky picture rolled down by the side of Joe.

"Whew!" muttered Joe. "Look at that, now."

"Let's git out of dis," said Jim.

"Harris," shouted the sergeant, addressing one of his men; "bring a torch here."

"He'll come under the log," whispered Joe, in a suppressed voice.

"Den me kill 'im," replied Jim, baring his tomahawk.

"No, no, not dead—strike him with the back."

They heard a heavy footstep, and retired to each side of the narrow space. A torch was intruded into the cavity, followed by a shock-head. No sooner did the shock-head come in view, than the tomahawk descended on one side and the pistol-butt on the other.

"Harris!" bawled the sergeant from the outside.

"What?" said a gruff voice inside.

"What's the matter?" asked the sergeant.

"Fell down," replied the gruff voice.

"Have you got the picture?" said Dacy.

"Yes; but my light is out."

"Come up, then."

"I'm comin'," said the gruff voice.

The sergeant and Dacy saw a person issue from the cavity,

and he first reached forth his hand for the lost treasure. Instead, he received a blow from behind which felled him to the ground, while Dacy shared his fate by a blow from the man who held the picture. As the two regained their feet, they had a dissolving view of a tall man dressed in the green coat of the Riders, disappearing in the swamp, followed by an Indian in a green blouse, each holding a rifle in his hand.

"There they go again," shouted Dacy, knocking down the swamp-sucker nearest to his hand, to relieve his mind. "Fools! fools! idiots! blockheads! they will escape."

As the bushes closed behind them, the first gray tints of morning showed themselves through the trees, and the "suckers" took the trail at once. They knew the swamp as well as the men they followed. Most of them had been brought up in it, and they followed as fast as the two scouts fled.

About two miles from the river there lived a man by the name of Robinson. His family consisted of himself, a gray-haired man, his daughter Stella, and a cousin of the latter, a Miss Josie Conrad, the prettiest little damsel in the Catawba country. The two girls were seated on the portico of their house, talking earnestly.

"Josie," said Stella Robinson, "why does your cousin, Lionel Dacy, come here so often? I do not like him. You know that, though my father has taken a protection because he is old, he is at heart a staunch whig, and so am I."

Josie laughed merrily.

"You like my cousin Lionel quite as well as I do, and I have his word for it that he hates me to distraction. You can't think why he comes here? That is odd. I made that out long ago. He is in love, Stella; you know with whom."

"I wish he would not come here," repeated Stella, blushing. "I know what you mean; but I do not care for him at all. In truth, I fear him. He is one of those who oppress the poor, and join with hard masters against the overburdened. I hate him!"

"So do I," said Josie. "When did you hear from Fred Stanley?"

"Not very lately. Tarleton is out after Sumter, and Fred has been in the saddle for nearly a week. I am afraid Lionel Dacy and he will meet. If they do, there will be bloodshed."

I know that Dacy is out with Tarleton, that infamous butcher of brave men."

"See!" cried Josie, suddenly. "Why do these men run so fast? They are coming this way."

Stella followed the direction of her finger and saw two men running down the road which led from the river, at their best speed. One was a tall white man, who cast aside a green coat as he ran, and the other was an Indian. It was the scout and his friend, escaping from their enemies.

"Hide us!" cried Joe, as they came up to the portico, panting for breath. "We are whigs of Sumter's band, and Dacy's men are at our heels."

"Come into the house," said Stella. "How lucky it is that father is away! Bolt and bar the doors, Josie. Look out of the window and see if they are coming."

The girl obeyed.

"They are about a quarter of a mile back, just coming over the hill. There is no time to lose. Where will we hide them?"

"Somewhere, and quickly," said Joe. "We have been hard pressed."

"Go up here," said Stella, pointing to the main stairway. "Show the way into your room, Josie. It is the only place."

They obeyed her without a word. Josie led the way, and they entered a neat little room filled with the articles of a woman's toilet. Joe cast an amused glance around. A long time had passed since he had been in a room only tenanted by a woman. He had made the forest his home, and rested under the swinging boughs of the pine trees. It was not often that his tired head knew any other covering.

"Here is no place to hide," he said. "I am too large to cover myself with any of these traps," and he glanced at the slight figure of Josie, and then at his own strong body. At this moment they heard the tramp of horses and knew that Dacy's men had reached the place.

"Help me to move this chest of drawers," said Stella, indicating one of the old-fashioned articles of furniture known by that name, which occupied one corner of the room. The two men moved it easily, and showed behind it a small square door in the wall. Stella turned a button and this door swung

open, revealing a small closet just large enough for the two to crouch within it.

"I am afraid to leave you without any defense," said Joe, pausing, as Stella held the door open for them to enter.

"Do not fear for us," said Josie. "I know Lionel Dacy. He will not harm us. Go in."

"If you need help, call us," said Joe.

"We shall not need it. But go in quickly; they are at the door."

The two men entered, and the door was closed behind them. They heard the chest moved back to the wall, and the light footsteps, as they tripped quickly down the stairs.

A rattling of sabers, oaths, and blows upon the door, showed that the band was getting impatient. The girls went to an upper window and threw it open. The space in front of the house was filled by armed men, the hardest riders in the gang of Dacy. He was thundering at the door when Josie looked out.

"What do you want here, Lionel Dacy?" she asked, having taken command of the garrison. "I did not expect to see you."

"Open the door, my dear," he said. "We think that you are hiding a couple of whig spies, an Indian and a white man. Have you seen any of them about here?"

"What should we be doing with *men* in the house?" cried Josie, indignantly. "Mr. Robinson has gone to the courthouse and left us here alone."

"But they may have slipped in without your knowing any thing about it."

"That is impossible," said Josie.

"We must come in," said Dacy. "Miss Stella, I appeal to you. Let us in."

"I do not think I ought!"

"Open the door, I say," cried Dacy, beginning to get angry. "I am sent by Tarleton to search for these men, and I will do it if I have to break the door down."

"You are brave fellows, indeed," said Josie. "I am proud of my cousin. You are a disgrace to your family, Lionel Dacy; you are the only one who ever joined the British and made war upon women. Well, I will open the door, because

I know you will keep your word. Don't be impatient. As for these spies, I hope you may find them. Your eyes will be good if you find them here. I wish you had all I could give you, and the fate I expect you will all meet one day."

"What is that?" asked Dacy, insolently approaching his face close to hers.

"A halter, my dear sir—a halter! You richly deserve it!"

"Be careful, my girl," said he, with an angry flush. "We sometimes forget, when we hear a woman talking treason, that she is a woman, and give her the fate of a traitor."

"I think you ought to know that I am not to be frightened by the threats of one who serves a foreign master. There, sir, you wish to search this house. We will begin with the garrets, and go *down*. I begin at the garrets, because we have *wine* in the *cellars*, and I fear that if you commenced *there*, you would not prosecute the search until you had either finished the wine, or drunk yourselves to death. No, we will begin with the garrets, and you can then get drunk at your leisure. Do you see the wisdom of this, sir?"

Dacy made an angry movement toward the little rebel, but as the eye of Stella was upon him, he restrained himself, and with his men was soon rummaging the garrets and rooms above, with very poor success. They searched all the rooms, *save those of Stella and Josie*.

"Our rooms," said the latter, indicating them by a gesture of her hand. "*Gentlemen* might have scruples about entering a lady's bed-chamber, but *that* need not make any difference with you."

Dacy understood the sarcasm and taunt.

"Termagant!" he fairly hissed.

She laughed, a malicious little laugh, and pushed open the door of Stella's chamber. Her room came next, and now the real test came; they trembled for the men in the wall.

The usual drumming with sword belts struck a fear into the hearts of the two girls, for they had good reason to fear that the hiding-place of the spies would be discovered. But another individual appeared upon the scene.

He was a stout-built, hardy-looking man, armed with a rifle and pistols. He pushed by the men at the door, and strode into the room.

"Kit Dayton!" burst from the lips of the leader of the gang. "By the king, man, you are hardy to enter this room, in the very face and eyes of Dacy's Lambs!"

"I do not fear you or your *lambs*, as you call them. I find you intruding yourselves upon two unprotected females, and I am here to see that they do not come to harm."

"Did you not think of the danger to yourself?"

"I have learned to think that man can die but once, and that if he yields up his life in a good cause he can not die better. But it is not my intention to die alone. I ask you, *sirs*, to leave this house."

"We intend to leave it, when we get ready. How modest you are! You *only* require thirty men to run before a single arm."

"Will you go out?"

"Seize him," shouted Dacy. "By heaven! this is too much. Run down, Jim, and bring up half a dozen lariats. I'll hang the old dog from the highest window of the house. Out of my way, girl; don't cling about my knees. I tell you he shall die!"

"Stand back!" cried Kit, bringing his rifle into the hollow of his hand with sudden emphasis. "I have not come here to die by *your* hands, villain and alien! I hold the lives of three of you here. I do not seek your lives, but the first man who lifts a hand to harm me dies!"

Half a score sprung at him. The rifle cracked, and two of the gang fell. It could not well be otherwise, crowded as they were into the narrow room. But, the grim old man stood firm, with a pistol in each hand. For a moment, the band gave back before him.

"Cowards!" roared Dacy. "You are treading in the blood of your friends."

"Let the girls go out," said the old hero, "and then come on, every man of you!"

"I will not go, I will not go!" shrieked Josie. "You shall not murder that old man because he wished to be a friend to us. You *shall* not."

"Out, girl!" cried one of the gang, seizing her by the shoulders.

"Help! help!" was her cry.

The heavy chest of drawers came tumbling to the floor, and the spies sprung forth. First came Joe, holding a pistol in one hand and a knife in the other. Then followed Jim Lane, flourishing his bright hatchet in the air. The gang gave back before them, as they ranged themselves by the side of Kit. The old man turned his head enough to see that they were friends, and then again faced his foes. He knew them well enough. He was a faithful whig, and had sheltered the scouts often when they were pressed by the foe. He, indeed, had secured information respecting the British army, and had imparted it to the scouts. One of the chief objects of their visit was to see him, and take the information he had obtained. Yet, by word or sign they never gave the enemy to understand that they had ever before met.

"Two lives!" shouted Joe, lifting his pistol.

"Two more!" said Kit, showing his arms.

Jim said nothing, but he shook the bright blade before their eyes, and his eyes glistened and gleamed like the cold steel.

A determined front will awe any number of cowards, and these were little else. They were brave barn-burners; they could even hang whigs with a good grace; but when it came to meeting three armed and determined men in a crowded room, the situation is very like that of the man who put his head into the lion's jaws, without first stipulating that he should be allowed to take it out again.

Besides, very few of them had fire-arms with them; they had unthinkingly left their carbines and pistols with the horse-guard at the door.

"Charge!" cried Joe, suddenly.

The three went through the ranks of their foes, striking right and left. The girls heard oaths and blows, the sound of falling bodies, the wail of the Indian and the cries of the scout. Then came two pistol-shots, and the sound of rapid hoofs beating the hard road outside. They ran to the upper windows. The horse-guards, three in number, lay dead on the green sward. The horses of the Riders were stamping and rushing madly to and fro, while down the road, pressing their horses to their best speed, went the Indian and Kit. Where was Joe? Still fighting for freedom, hard pressed by

the foe. It was a brief struggle, however, for ten men soon overpowered him. Seeing this, his friends turned their horses' heads toward him as if to charge for a rescue.

"Go on!" he shouted, "you can do me no good."

"Keep still, my boy," said the fellow who was binding his arms. "Jim."

"What?"

"Where are those bracelets you found in Guilford?"

"Here they are."

"Put them on this fellow. Oh, but we'll tame you, my lark! You'll find this a hard road to travel."

Dacy strode back into the hall, where he met the two girls.

"So, you won't have *men* in the house, Miss Josie? Oh, no, of course not. You had better nail up that hole in the wall where you put your *man*. You see that we have him safe; his neck will pay the forfeit of this folly; I tell you he is doomed! Search him."

The men were doing this, and handed the captain every paper taken from his person. Among others, appeared a letter directed to "Miss Stella Robinson."

"Ah, ha; what is this?" he asked, triumphantly.

"That is the young lady's letter, from a friend," said Joe. "I promised to bring it to you, Miss."

"Will you give me my letter?" asked Stella, quietly extending her hand toward him.

"No, I will not," he answered.

Josie's eyes flashed, and with a sudden bound she obtained possession of the letter and fled up the stairs to her room, where she locked herself in. Stella would have followed, but the angry voice of Dacy stopped her.

"Show us the way to your cellar," he said. "I wish to see if it is strong enough to hold a prisoner."

She quietly led the way. The cellar was large, and filled with the barrels, boxes, jars, etc., which are found in the cellar of a thrifty mansion. From this they passed into an inner apartment, and Stella held the light on high. It was a wine-vault, and the door was heavy and strong; one small window gave light on each side, but they were too small to admit the passage of a man's body. Dacy looked about him anxiously; he was sure that with the guard he would put, it would be

Impossible for the prisoner to escape. He wished to go in pursuit of the Indian and his companion, while he left Joe in durance vile. The prisoner was brought down, the irons removed from his hands, and his feet shackled instead. It was very plain to see that they had no idea of giving him too free a use of his legs. He watched their preparations carelessly, and threw himself down upon the hard floor, regardless of the taunts of his captors. Then the key rattled in the lock, and they were gone. He knew that his friends were free, and hoped much from them ; he finally rose and worked his way to one of the little windows and looked out into the light. He saw the band mounting their recovered horses, while a squad of six remained lounging to and fro in front of the house. These were his guards ; he heard the bugle sound, and the troop move off, and knew that they were after his friends, but trusted the sharp-witted Indian against them ; for he hoped, if he were rescued at all, that it would be by the hands of this man. He looked at his shackles ; they were of the old-fashioned kind, connected by a single rod. How he longed for a file ; if he had one he would soon be free, for, with his feet at liberty, he had sufficient confidence in himself to believe that he could escape. He did not repine at the fate which had brought him to this trouble, and yet, for the sake of the good he might have done the cause, he was sorry. There was another thought, too ; it was of his mother, who, in her home, was praying God's blessing on the head of her boy, whom she had yielded up, not without a heart-pang, to the service of his country. He did not know that his aged and care-stricken parent even then was kneeling on the hard floor of that home, praying for him.

But her prayer was heard !

CHAPTER III.

THE SCOUT'S ADIEU.

JOSIE put her wits to work to set the scout at liberty before the return of Dacy, who would not hesitate to hang him immediately, especially if the others made their escape. She tried to conciliate the sergeant left in charge of the prisoner. That worthy was not proof against the fascinations of the bewitching damsel. She came down to the room where he was sitting, bringing him a bottle of wine and some food.

"You are not to blame for what my cousin does," she said, persuasively. "Now I want you to do me a favor."

"Any thing in reason," growled the sergeant, with his mouth full. "Don't hesitate; say what you want."

"Only to carry something to eat to the poor prisoner: he looked so hungry."

"I suppose the fellow must eat, as he is not likely to be hanged until to-morrow, worse luck. Yes, you may give him something; I can't bear to see a soldier kept fasting when there is such glorious fodder in the house."

Josie tripped back and held a whispered conversation with Stella, after which, she went to the sentry at the head of the cellar stairs, who refused to let her pass until the sergeant gave him orders to do so, which he did, swearing at the soldier for stopping a young lady who kept such celestial liquor in the house. The prisoner lay upon the floor of the vault. Josie approached him softly and touched him. He looked up with some surprise.

"Do they hurt you much," she said, pointing to the manacles.

"Very little;" he said, "I am an old campaigner and used to these things. Don't trouble yourself about me, my dear Miss, I am not worth it; men of my class expect reverses; we face death every day because it is our work. I am sorry that it happened just now, for I am afraid that the general

needs my help as he needs the help of every good and true man. It is a hard thing for an old scout to be trapped like this, but since it has come, I will bear it like a man."

"We will do what we can for you. Remember that the cause of our country is as dear to us as to you, and that we love its defenders. Besides, you were taken while defending us from insult."

"True; but that is a man's duty. We would have been less than men if we could not do as much for you as that old man, Kit Clayton. Did the young lady get her letter?"

"Indeed she did!" said Josie, with flashing eyes. "I kept it for her. Did Fred Stanley send it by you?"

"Yes; he is my captain. But, I hardly ever stay with the company except when there is fighting to do. We shall be at it again soon, and that is one reason why I hate to be cooped up here. Don't you think you could manage to get a file to me? If I had one, I could get rid of these irons and then I could at least die fighting."

"I will see what I can do."

"Be sure that the sentry does not see any thing you bring down. He will be on the watch."

"I will take care."

"And one thing more. If I do not escape from this place, I want you to do me a favor. My name is Joseph Barnes, and my mother lives in Guilford. I want you to write to her, (her name is Margaret,) and tell her just how it all ended. I can trust you to do it. You will be tender in writing to the dear old woman, for she loves me much. Tell her I did what I could for the cause."

"I will; I will," sobbed Josie, who never could keep up under a scene like this; "but, you *will* get away. I will write to Tinkton; I know him, and beg for your life."

"There, there, Miss; don't distress yourself about it. It makes but little difference how a man dies. To be sure, I had looked to die in battle, with my hands free, striking the enemy of my country. It will be hard for me to die by hanging, for that will be my fate; they know me so well. It will be a shame," (and the cheek of the bold scout flashed as he spoke), "but I shall be kept up by the thought that I have done what I could."

"It is nearly noon," said Josie, through her sobs, "I will send you down something to eat. You must be very hungry Sentry?"

"Well, Miss."

"Stay here until I come back. I am going to run up and bring him something to eat."

She flitted through the door, both the men looking admiringly after her pretty figure.

She ran into the kitchen, where Stella was putting out a warm pie, and some cold meats, bread and butter.

"Is it done?" she whispered.

"Yes," replied Stella. "Take them down. Be careful that you do not let the sentry *handle* the pie. Give him a bottle of wine, and that will put him in good humor. Bring up some bottles, and give to the rest. I do not intend that they shall be very wakeful to-day."

Josie did as she was told, and found the sentry casting longing glances at the bottles in the racks. She took one out, and gave it to him, smilingly telling him that so good a soldier should know how to drink from the bottle.

"Do not touch the pie yet," she remarked to the scout. "Let it stand and cool, or you may burn your fingers. You, sir, carry up this basket of wine for me."

The sentry took it up, and started for the door. She stopped quickly, and whispered in the ear of the scout. He nodded, with a pleased look on his face, and she followed the sentry out. He locked the door, and they went up the stairs together. No sooner had the sound of their footsteps ceased than the scout seized the pie, and breaking it, drew out something from it. It was a file; and he thrust it hurriedly into his pocket, with a low chuckle.

He then took up the bread. As he did so, a circular piece fell out of the bottom, revealing a small bottle.

"Acid!" he whispered, hugging it to his bosom in joy. "I shall now be free."

He stooped and poured a small quantity into the keyhole of the shackle. He lay quiet for a while, then took the file and began his work upon the bolt, slowly and cautiously, making as little noise as possible. He would work for a few moments, and then suspend his labor to listen, lest some one

on the outside should hear the rasping sound. The acid eased the labor, and in the course of a half-hour he shook off his shackles. Rising slowly, he stretched his muscular limbs and looked from the windows. Few of the guard were in sight, and these were lounging under the trees, smoking and playing cards, and laughing at the man on guard, which vigilant functionary was drinking wine at the door of the cellar.

He turned back and rolled one of the wine-casks away from the wall. A bar of iron lay upon the ground. With a few quick wrenches he worked some of the heavy stone out of the wall, and showed the soft earth beyond. The aperture was about twice the size of a man's body. Looking about him, he now selected a large empty wine-cask, about the size of the full one he had rolled away. This he placed in the same position near the wall, and removed the head. Using a part of it as a shovel, he began to throw out the dirt, not upon the ground, but into the empty cask. He was not disturbed until about six o'clock, when the sergeant came down, and put a couple of dishes inside the door. Joe was lying upon the earth, as usual, with his shackles on his feet, and his back reclining against the wine-cask, which was pushed against the wall. The stones he had removed he had hidden under a heap of rubbish, which, for lack of room, had been piled in one corner. The sergeant, satisfied with the situation of affairs, locked the door, and went up to place his guard about the house. He did this rather from discipline than any fear that the prisoner would escape. He saw that the shackles were on his feet, that he hardly seemed to have stirred from his recumbent position, and thought that the bold spy had given up in despair of help, and was now calmly waiting for his death.

Could he have seen how quickly he bounded up and plunged into the work in the cavity, he would not have placed his men with such cool indifference. In short, the idea that the spy could escape never so much as entered his mind. He set his men, gave his corporal his orders, and went calmly off to bed.

Not that the captain had taken too much wine, but--there was very little left in the basket! And mischievous little Josie knew it, and told Stella that they would sleep well that night.

They had formed a nice little plan to free the scout, only expecting him to rid himself of his shackles with the file. But he was busy, though they did not know it.

It was ten o'clock, and the guard upon the west side of the house paced slowly his lonesome beat. He had taken his share of the wine, and was very sleepy indeed, and could not see the use of walking around on that beat when the prisoner was safe enough. He stood undecided whether to sleep or to remain awake, when the soil trembled under his very feet, and from the bowels of the earth burst forth a terrible cry, a cry as of a soul in agony. The soldier was but mortal, and had only the courage of a man. He yelled in terror. Who of us all, in the darkness of night, hearing and feeling what he did, would not do the same? His cry brought to him the guard on all sides, and the sergeant from within.

"What's the matter?"

"Who yelled?"

"What's the trouble?"

"Any body killed?"

And a host of other questions. They heard him with a laugh of incredulity, when again the earth shook and the cry came forth, a muffled, deadened, horrible cry, as if from the grave. The sergeant, as brave a man as need be, fell back three paces, regarding the spot with an expression of undisguised horror imprinted on his face. They looked from one to another; the cry had pealed out under their feet.

Could it be the spirit of some of the slain victims of Deeg's Limbs? Had the other world, indeed, the power to send its tenants back to earth, to haunt the wicked?

"What can it be?" whispered the sergeant, turning his blanched face upon his men. A strange hush fell upon them. These men of blood always are superstitious. It is natural, and a result of their education, that this should be. They looked upon this as a visitation from the world of spirits.

Even as they stood, looking each upon the face of the other, that cry broke out, longer, louder, and more fierce than before! Flesh and blood could not stand that, and one and all turned and fled toward the door of the house. Once there, they lay shivering for an hour, until the sergeant, plucking up courage, took a lantern and went out to explore. He found the earth

upturned, as if by the passage of a heavy body, some fresh dirt thrown out upon the sod, in which was the mark of a trodden foot. He understood it in a moment, and his angry call brought around him the whole guard. He pointed to the riven earth and held down the light. They saw a slanting tunnel, about seven feet long, through which the bottom of the cask was visible. The sergeant slid down this tunnel, landing on his feet on the hard floor. He found the broken shackles, the cask half-full of dirt, the broken wall, and he knew that the scout was gone.

As he emerged from the tunnel, he heard from the woods behind, a cry of derision.

"I say, sergeant," cried the voice, "do you think you can lay that ghost?"

"Oh, you infernal rebel!" shouted the sergeant, "don't think to escape us. The Lambs will follow you night and day."

"Good-by," called the scout, out of the gloom. "Give my respects to your captain, and my compliments—*Joe Barnes'* compliments. Tell him that I hope to meet him some time under more favorable circumstances."

Joe turned, and went a short distance into the wood. He was pushing his way cautiously through the bushes, thrusting them aside with his hands, when he felt an iron grasp upon each wrist, while a voice hissed in his ear,

"Don't speak, or me kill you."

"You won't kill me, will you, Jim?"

It was his faithful friend, who had hung around the house, and was preparing, like the girls, to attempt his rescue. But, with his accustomed hardihood, the scout had taken the matter into his own hands, and freed himself; so that, while the girls were just started by the cries of rage on the part of his foes, he was safe in the woods, shaking the hand of old Kit on the one side, and of Jim Lane on the other.

"How did you get clear of Dacy?" asked Joe.

"I'm gone down toward Cutwater," said Jim, grinning; "I'm too tired, some way. Don't make any difference. Can't catch Jim Lane when him take to timber. De debble himself can't catch Jim Lane *dar*! Kit here; he say him stan' by me; tell me get you out."

"Yes," said Kit, "I have looked my last upon my home

until the war is done. I have spilled the blood of the five, and henceforth they will be like tigers on my track. I tell you, young man, that I did not seek for their blood this morning, not I. I only went to see that they did no harm to the two dear girls. They tried to hang them, and then I fought for my life. I don't think it was wrong."

"And you did well, old man. I heard the girl cry for help, and there was too much of the old southern blood in me to hear a woman call in vain. But, see here, what am I to do for a rifle?"

"That's so," said one of the others. "You *hate*n't got any rifle, have you?"

"No; but I know that the sentry on the east side of the house has it. I saw him through the window. Now, boys, I have made up my mind to have that particular gun. He's got my pistols, too, blame him!"

"Goin' back?" asked Jim.

"Yes, I am."

"Den I goin', too. What you do, Kit? Go wid us, or stay in timber?"

"I will go."

"We won't need to go clear up to the house—that is, all of us. Jim and I will do it. You stay here, and if you hear the call of the whippowil, you may know that we are in trouble, and make off as fast as you can. I think we shall do it as easy as eating. At any rate, no tory is going to carry my rifle!" He did not add: "I would like to get a peep at the little girl who brought me the file!" but it was in his thoughts, nevertheless!

The two scouts passed noiselessly over the ground, and soon were out of sight in the gloom. It was the nature of these two to seek danger. Most men, under the circumstances, would have made off as fast as possible; but Joe had the chivalrous feeling of the old Grecian, and would not leave his weapons in the hands of the enemy. It was a foolishly bold, almost, but one which suited the scouts, nevertheless.

The sentries had taken their places again, to watch the empty cellar, where the treasure had been. The one who had confiscated the weapons of Joe did not see the two dark bodies crawling toward him. Once, indeed, he thought he heard a

sound, and peered cautiously forth. Nothing could he see in the intense blackness of the night.

He turned again, and paced on. All at once, a lithe arm was thrown about him, a hand pressed upon his mouth, and the blade of a sharp knife glittered at his throat. He could make out the face, so close did it lie to his. It was the Indian. His eyes burned in the night like stars. The man did not resist, for he understood the stern menace of that face too well to cry out.

Joe was quickly by his comrade's side, and so noiselessly, that the prisoner did not know that he had come. Taking a stick about six inches in length, and some buckskin thongs from his pocket, he was not long in manufacturing a gag which would make an outcry impossible. This was thrust into the mouth of the guard, and tied securely behind his ears. More buckskin thongs were produced, and his hands and feet were bound in the same manner. This done, Jim caught up his rifle, and began to pace his beat, while Joe, after rolling the prostrate man up against the wall, proceeded to climb up the side of the veranda to the window of Josie's room. He had his own reasons for believing that the girl was not asleep.

Once on the veranda above, he tapped lightly at her window; so lightly, in fact, that it might have been thought the flapping of a curtain, stirred by the wind, against the glass.

Josie was awake; in short, neither of the girls had retired that night, but sat in their room listening to every sound. They had heard the cry of the scout before he emerged from his hiding-place, and saw from the window how the scared guards took to their heels. She had kept her eyes on the spot from which the cries came, saw the scout scatter the earth with his strong shoulders, and disappear in the gloom. The girls thought they would see no more of him, and were thinking of retiring, full of joy at his escape, when they were startled by the tapping on the pane.

It was not a loud noise; still, it was not natural, and Josie arose and walked to the window. The scout nodded and smiled when he saw her bright little face. She hesitated a single moment, and then, carefully raising the window, admitted him.

Stella greeted him kindly, and chided him for coming back into danger.

He shook his head.

"I promised the captain that I would get an answer to his letter, and one of us is going back to camp to-day, and I will take it in. If you will write it now I will take it."

Stella at once sat down to the hurried task.

"Is that what you came back for?" whispered Josie.

"Partly that," said the scout, looking approvingly at the spite; "partly to get my rifle, and more to thank you for the good work you did in bringing me that file. I shall never forget it, Miss; our southern men are a little rough, sometimes, but they are not men to forget a favor done. It may be" (and the scout took the little hands in his) "that I may never have the power to repay you for this; but if you ever need the help of a strong arm, call upon Joseph Barnes, and if the earth is not upon his breast, he will help you."

"You have no need to thank me any more than Stella; she made the pie," said Josie, laughing very low. "Where is the Indian?"

"He is playing sentry. We have bound the original one, the fellow who had my arms, and rolled him up against the wall. Look out and you may see the Choctaw."

"He ought to stagger a little, to counteract any of those guards," whispered the girl, "for I gave them a whole basket of good wine, and it is all gone!"

"Are you not ashamed of yourself for putting temptation in the way of the poor fellows? Soldiers get very little wine, nowadays, especially in our army. Is Miss Stella writing?"

"Yes; she will soon finish. It will not do for you to stay here too long. Hurry, Stella!"

"I have almost finished," replied the other, without looking up. She had sealed the note, and was hastily casting on a direction. This done, she handed it to the scout, and told him he had better go. He shook hands with the two, saying,

"It may be that I shall be taken, for the calling of a scout, spy, call it what you will, is precarious; let me bid you good-

by, and hope that some time we shall meet, after the war is over, as friends. God bless you both."

There was a suspicious moisture in little Josie's eyes; but she only waved him a good-by as he dropped noiselessly to the earth, and took up his rescued rifle. The Indian was quickly by his side, and turning their backs upon the house they strode off into the woods. Not a moment too soon, for scarcely had they gone, when hoofs rattled hard upon the road, and the band of Dacy, looking worn and weary, swept up from their useless search.

They had followed the wrong trail, which led them across the Catawba; here they lost it, and had been scouring the country, in the vain hope of finding the fugitives. The sergeant turned out at the sound of the bugle.

"Did you catch them?" he asked, eagerly.

"No," was the sullen reply. "I hope you have your prisoner safe."

"He is gone," replied the sergeant, sullenly.

"What?" Dacy's hand dropped heavily upon the hilt of his saber. "Don't tell me that he has escaped?"

"Just that, sir."

"When and how? Quick, I am in no humor to repeat my questions."

"He tunneled out, sir; come and see."

Dacy followed him to the spot, and thence down into the cellar. He lifted the broken shackle, looked at it a moment, and saw the mark of the file and the action of the acid, and turned quickly to the sergeant.

"He has been helped. Did you allow any body to come down here?"

"I believe Miss Josie came down after some wine."

"Who came with her?"

"Tom Glenn, sir."

"Call him down."

The sentry came down in some fear at the summons, though he knew nothing of the escape.

"Did you allow Miss Josie to come down here alone?"

"No, sir, I came with her."

"Did she bring any thing down here?"

"No, sir, not at first; she left me here and went up and

brought him something to eat. I was watching all the time, and I did not see her give him any thing."

"Umph. What did she bring down?"

"Some bread and butter, cake, a pie, and some little fixings."

Dacy mused a moment.

"It is very plain that they have helped him to a file; but, we can't get hold of it. He is gone, and I have lost a major's commission, unless we catch him before he gets back; I would like to get hold of him again. Go up, sergeant, and tell Bryerly to picket his horses in the grove; let the men stay there, and come into the house to get a little sleep. We have got little honor out of this. Four men killed outright and as many more wounded, and not a single whig to show."

They passed the rest of the night in quiet. Far off on the road toward the Catawba, the two scouts were sleeping on the moist earth, while old Kit, with the news he had to impart, and the note of Stella to Captain Fred Stanley, was making his way cautiously toward the camp of Sumter. The venerable patriot had said truly that he could no longer live in his old home. He had spilled blood; he had made himself an outcast in their eyes. Home, from this time until the war was done, he had none; he must be a wanderer over the face of the earth. It was hard, too, to part, for, like all southerners, he loved his little possessions well. He trod on unceasingly toward the partisan lines, and before the morning had come upon the earth fully, he was swimming the river to his Canaan, on the other shore; and, before noon, Sumter, acting on the information he gave, prepared for a ride after Dacy.

CHAPTER IV.

THREE YOUNG MEN.

ABOUT a week after the events recorded, a young man in the plain dress of a gentleman of that period, crossed the Catawba, not far from Robinson's, and rode for the house. The young man in question sat his horse with the ease and grace of a trained rider. He had a pleasant, handsome face, touched with that native pride which is the indication of good birth and breeding. The horse he bestrode was a thoroughbred, black as night, who tugged hard at the bit, but was restrained by the iron hand of his master. Close in his rear rode a white man dressed like himself in plain clothes, but with an air about him which showed that he was out of his element.

"Be careful, sir," said the young man. "You will betray us if you do not keep up a cautious disguise. There is really little danger, for that last brush has cleared the country of Tories; but they may return."

"Very true, captain," said the supposed servant, a fellow showing great length of limb and muscle. "As you say, there is little danger. Then why not ride in like bold troopers, as we are?"

"That may not well be, orderly. The truth is, it is not for myself that I fear, but I wish to protect Mr. Robinson, who might suffer, if it was known that he had two such rampant whigs as we are, at his house. What a catch it would be for Leland Dacy, if he knew that two men whom he hates as he has cause to hate us, are in the heart of the Catawba country! You say you saw Tarkenton again. Do you know that I never had that pleasure? That time he cut us up on the Catawba. I was away after a small convoy from Entaw, and did not come back until our men were scattered. I wish you would describe him to me, for upon my word, I should like to know him."

"I saw him by the light of the camp-fire," said Joe, (for it was the servant,) "and I should say that this would be nearly his picture: a man not more than twenty-six or seven years

of age; about five feet seven in height, but with a good pair of shoulders; a complexion like an Indian, and an eye like a snake. *That's Tarleton.*"

"A good portrait, no doubt. In after years, I would not have the record of that man for all the gold of the Indians. I knew Tarleton in England, as a boy. I did not know what he would be when he grew older. Where is the Indian?"

"Gone on a scout after Weyms, who is in the country ward Futaw. Sumter sent him. Do you know Lionel Dacy?"

"We never met."

"No loss to you," said Joe. "Not that he is lacking in the outward show of a gentleman, but he has a heart black as night. But see. Who is the horseman coming this way?"

Joe looked hastily ahead, and pulled the light flaxen wig which he wore closer over his face as he said,

"Keep your disguise. As sure as my name is Barnes it is Dacy himself."

It was indeed the Tery, mounted on a powerful horse which he always rode while in battle. The young men eyed each other keenly, for strangers were looked after sharply in these days. Some evil spirit induced Dacy to draw rein, and address the other.

"Good times, sir," he said. "Good times for those who love the king. Are you from below?"

Then seeing the other start, he added apologetically: "One must be impertinent in these times. The service of the king has kept me in this part of the country, and I really know little of what is passing in the lower country."

"Little or nothing," said the young whig, constraining himself to answer civilly. "The whigs are quiescent."

"The rebels, you mean."

"It don't matter much. In our part of the country it is as natural as life to call a king's man a Tory, and an American a whig. As I was saying, they are very quiescent. There are those, however, who say that they are only keeping quiet to gather head. To be sure, Gates is utterly defeated, and Sumter is beaten, but these fellows never know that they are beaten."

"You are right," said Dacy. "Now there is Sumter. Probably no man ever was whipped as he was at Fishing Creek;

but if you have heard the news, you will know that he is at his old work again, and has cut up a body of Loyalists from Deep River, who were on their way to join Clinton. In my opinion, there is nothing in the history of nations to equal the stubborn resistance of these people. If I were not their enemy, I should admire it."

"Then you are an Englishman?"

"No," said the tory, with a flush. "I am Captain Lionel Dacy, of his Majesty's Loyal Riders, known familiarly as Dacy's Lambs. Perhaps you have heard of the troop?"

"Yes," cried the young man. "I have heard of them." He checked himself as he was proceeding, with more heat than the occasion warranted, and added: "And they have done good service for the king. But, why are you not on service now? Do not Sumter and Marion give you enough to do, to keep you in the saddle?"

"Curses on the Swamp Fox," replied Dacy, heartily. "I have been with Tarleton in many a chase after Marion, but catch him we could not. He doubles and turns like the animal from which he takes his nickname. But Sumter don't trouble us half so much as Marion, because he gives us the satisfaction of a fair stand-up fight once in a while. But you have my name. Perhaps you will now favor me with yours?"

"Mr. Frederick Ward, of Charleston," replied the other. "I beg you will excuse me. My business calls me."

"May I ask what branch of the service you are in, sir?" asked Dacy.

"How know you that I am in *either* branch?" demanded the other. "I have not said so."

"This is a time, sir, when there are few young men who have not taken sides with one party or the other," was the reply. "Few, too few, indeed, have joined the army of their lawful sovereign. I hope you are one."

"If it had been a part of my business to tell it to every one who might chance to ask," said Mr. Ward, haughtily, "perhaps I might satisfy you on that point. But, as it is not, I must beg to be excused."

"I beg your pardon," said Dacy; "I did not intend to pry into your affairs; but, in these times, a man is expected to say that he is for or against the king."

"Oh, as to *that*," said Ward, "you are right. One should declare his sentiments, and mine are these: I am most decidedly *for* the king." He looked at Joe, as he said this, with a comical smile, which the *servant* reciprocated. All through the conversation, Joe had prudently kept in the background, for he feared that the sharp-eyed soldier would detect him.

"Give you good-day," said Dacy. "Might I ask if your business is in the neighborhood?"

"I shall stop for some days with the Robinsons," replied Ward. "Do you know them?"

"I do. And shall probably meet you there if you stay long enough. If not, I shall endeavor to meet you elsewhere."

"No doubt you will be able to do so," said the other, with a covert smile, which gave a doubtful meaning to his words. "I am sure it will not be my fault if you do not."

The two rode slowly forward, looking back at the retiring figure of the partisan.

"What did you mean by saying that you are *for* the king, captain?" said Joe, when the other was fairly out of earshot.

"I meant precisely what I said," replied the king. "I am *for* the king. That is to say, I am *for* him as you would be for a beaver or catamount which you were hunting. I hope to crib the king as soon as possible, for the quicker the inebriate old dotard is out of the way, the better for all concerned."

"Very good," said Joe. "But, do you not think our young friend, the captain, understood you another way?"

"That was his fault. I am not responsible for his mistakes. If he had pressed his inquiries, no doubt I might have been compelled to make him understand where I stood. But, as he did not, I am quite satisfied."

"Very good. Here we are at the house, and your wife is Miss Stella, and that pretty little girl who brought me the news. I shall remember that good act while I live."

"What! Is the unimpressible scout the hero of a score of battles and half a hundred skirmishes, brought down at last by a shot from the black eyes of a southern beauty? It speaks well for our women. Did you mention Stella, that I should be here soon?"

"No. I did not think, then, that you could come. Tarleton was here, and he will have the antecedents of every

man who comes near him, whom he does not know. It is just as well. She will be all the better pleased to see you."

They rode up to the house at a brisk pace. The girls were seated on the veranda. Stella started up with a cry of delight as she saw the face of the foremost rider, and ran down the steps to meet him. The young soldier leaned forward, and, passing his arm about the waist of the girl, kissed her lips.

"A thousand welcomes, *dear* Fred!" she cried, still holding his hand. "Dismount, and come into the house. Your servant will see to the horses."

Fred was about to proclaim who the *servant* was, when Joe stopped him by a quick motion of his hand, which he understood. The scout desired to preserve his incognito.

"Very good," said the captain, replying both to his motion and to Stella's words. "Take him round to the stable, George. See that he has something to eat, and half a pail full of water in half an hour. No drink while he is hot, remember!"

"George" rode off with the led horse, while the young captain who was Stella's correspondent in Sumter's corps, as well as her betrothed lover, passed into the house, where he was seized by Josie and then and there heartily kissed.

"I don't care if Stel is jealous, Fred," she cried. "I'm so glad to see you! And then you are my cousin, you know, and I've got a right to kiss you. Why did you not come before? Where is Sumter? When are you going to come down here, and break up the infamous band of that former relative of mine, Lionel Dacy? They have done wickedness enough. And oh, Fred! have you seen any thing of a scout of yours, who is called Joseph Barnes? He is a perfect hero! I love him *dearly*. Do you know that if it had not been for him, there is no telling what that Dacy would not have done? They were going to hang that poor old man, Kit Clayton. Do you know where he is? Where is that servant of yours? You called him George, didn't you?"

"There!" said Stanley, holding up his hand with a deprecatory gesture; "you have already asked me six questions, and if you expect me to answer any of them, I pray you to stop and give me time to think. In the first place, you

"inquire after my orderly, whom you designate as a hero. In the sense in which you use the word, you are right. The young gentleman is safe at present, and I hope will remain so. The service will lose a great helper when Joe is gone. Yes, Joe is safe."

"Who is he?"

"A gentleman of small fortune, who has given every thing to the cause after giving his old mother enough to maintain her. A true man, and my best friend."

"I knew that he could be trusted," said Josie, with a deep flush. "I am proud of him. I always am proud of my country when I know that such men are fighting in its cause!"

"There are many such in our army, especially in the corps of Sumter and Marion. It is a grand sight to see the ragged followers of Francis Morton, as I saw them not two weeks ago, when sent on a mission to them by Sumter. Dressed in every conceivable way, with insufficient food and no shelter, every face was calm, as if they slept every night under cover, and had a well-filled commissariat to supply them with food. Never doubt the country while the Herrys, Pickens, Sumter and Marion live."

"I never doubted it for a moment; I do not doubt it even in this dark hour. But, why are you here, Fred? It seems to me that the country never needed men in the field more than she does this day."

"In a few days we must again buckle on our armor," said he. "A new general is coming, one who is loved and trusted by the great Washington. The fault of our southern leaders, if we except Marion, is impetuosity. Sumter has often lost, by this failing, what he has gained by his bravery. But Greene, who is coming, is a cool, wary soldier, who never loses his head, nor allows his passion to run away with his judgment. Gates was not the man for this country. I heard that Greene was at Philadelphia, and would be here in the spring. In the mean time, Sumter is preparing for battle. Wemyss is out after him, but we will send him back with less men than he took out. By the way, Josie, will you see after my man, George? He has had nothing to eat for some hours."

"That is as good as saying that you are hungry too," said Stella, "for you would never eat while your servant went hungry."

"Don't ring, Stella," said Josie. "I will go and order something. You are *very* obtuse, or you would see that this is merely a hint for me to take myself out of the way. You need not have taken so much trouble, Master Fred. I was just going."

"My dear Josie—" he began.

"Don't, Fred. I am sufficiently versed in the wiles of lovers to understand you perfectly. Though I never have had any *personal* experience, I have made the actions of others my study, and know the signs."

"Be it so, then, since you will have it so. Off with you, and see that George has something to eat."

She went out, bowing to them with comic gravity, ordered a cold collation for Fred in the dining-room above, and a similar one for "George" in the kitchen. This done, she went after the latter worthy, and found him sitting on the rail of the veranda, whistling softly, with the long white locks hanging over his face, and kicking his heels against the lattice-work.

"There is something for you to eat in the kitchen, if you will come in," said Josie, smiling at the figure he cut. "The servants are out on the plantation, and I will see that you have enough."

The fictitious servant followed her into the kitchen with a slouching gait, peculiar to the swamp-sucker whom he represented, and sat down at the table, where he began to eat voraciously, watching Josie furtively from beneath his heavy brows.

"Have I seen you any where before, sir?" said Josie, with difficulty repressing a smile.

"Can't say positive, Miss," replied Joe. "Been gettin' round' this yer part of the kentry right smart lately. Yer mought a seen me, and yer moughtn't. I reckon mebbe yer mought."

"I thought so too. And it occurred to me, at the same time, how unreasonable some people are in adopting a disguise. I have frequently remarked people whose hair

was very dark who had light eyebrows; but I must say I never saw any one having light hair and dark eyebrows. And—Mr. Barnes, I think you might as well take off that dreadful wig, and appear in your proper person."

Joe laughed, and pulled off the flaxen wig, heavy beard and mustache, and threw them on the floor of the kitchen, behind the stove.

"You have sharp eyes, Miss Josie," he said. "I never thought of the eyebrows. It's lucky that no one else noticed it. Indeed, no one but a woman would have done so. How did you come to suspect me?"

"I knew that Fred would never have such a looking object as *you* were, with him. You looked for all the world like one of the poorest of the poor whites, just out of the swamp, and not such men as we have in our army. If I was you I would never wear that unfortunate disguise again."

"I never will," replied Joe. "That was all the captain's fault. He would have it that I was so well known in the country that I would get into trouble. He might have spared himself the pains. I never wore a disguise about the face before, for my scouting was mostly done in the night. The captain has a week's furlough and means to spend it here. As for myself, I was glad to come, for it will give me—give me—well, a better chance to thank you for your kindness to me when I was a prisoner!"

How the flush which lit up his face belied the cool deliberation of his words!

"Do not speak of it," she replied. "I did it for a soldier of America. Would you have me do less?"

"Thanks," he said, and was about to add something more when he heard the rapid beat of coming hoofs, and looking from the window saw a horseman just turning into the avenue which led to the house. To spring to the stove and hurry on the wig and false beard was the work of a moment. He had hardly done so when the head of Lloyd Day appeared at the window.

"Here, fellow," he said, "see to my horse and I will repay you. Rub him down well and give him a feed. Your servant, Miss Josie! Is Miss Stella within?"

"I thought you were going back to camp?"

"I have changed my mind. I have something to say to Miss Stella. Will you tell her I am here?"

"My cousin is engaged."

"I will see to that," cried Dacy, and rushing up the steps he entered the parlor unannounced.

CHAPTER V.

THE GAME OF CARDS.

ENTERING the room, he was conscious of breaking in on a lover's privacy. Stella and Fred had been sitting very close together, if the close proximity of the chairs could be taken into account. They had sprung to their feet, one in anger and the other in confusion. Stella was the confused. Dacy was far from being completely at his ease. There was a latent fire in his eye which threatened to break out at any moment. He stopped just inside the door and leaned against it, with a dark smile curling his thin lips.

"I did not know that I was breaking in on a conversation," he said. "You will excuse it."

"I thought you had taken your leave, Mr. Dacy," said Stella, whom this unwarrantable intrusion had roused. "To what am I to attribute the honor of this fresh visit?"

"I had something to say to you; something I had forgotten," stammered the tory. —

"It must have been quite *important*, since you *forgot* it," replied Stella. "However, if you will go into the hall you will find a servant who will take your hat and cloak."

Dacy looked downward. In his rage he had forgotten to leave these articles in the hall. Without another word he turned back and met Josie, who had followed him as quickly as possible, after a word of warning from the scout as to the necessity of preserving the incognito of himself and captain in the presence of Dacy.

"One would suppose that there is some attraction here, Captain Dacy, since you come so often. You are not very

polite. I supposed that you would wait for me to introduce you to the guest in the parlor. Have you entered?"

"You have a hornet's sting on the end of your tongue," said he, coarsely. "I have told you many times not to interfere with me. You will not take warning. The time will come when you will regret having put yourself in my way. Who is that fellow in the parlor with Stella?"

"I do not understand you."

"Must I repeat my question? Who is in the parlor with Miss Stella?"

"Oh! you said *fellow*; and I did not know any such person. There is or was a gentleman with my cousin; a friend—I may say a very dear friend of hers, one whom we regard very much. Mr. Fred Ward, of Charleston."

"Ah! the same name he gave me. What is he doing here?"

"You have been in the parlor. Did you not find that out?"

Dacy ground his teeth. This girl exasperated him more than he would have acknowledged. From the time she could talk she had been a thorn in the flesh to him. Had she been a man, he would have removed her from his path by violence. She saw that her words had hit the mark, and laughed as she added:

"I suspect that he is making love to Stella, though I do not like to betray confidence."

Dacy struck the hall-table so hard with his clenched hand that the blood started from his knuckles. Jessie was appalled by the expression of his face, and he saw it and broke into a laugh so bitter that her blood seemed to chill in her veins.

"You knew—none so well as you—that I love Stella, that I have loved her ever since I was a child—and, by my soul's honor, I will not see another step in and take my place. I swear to it that I will not. In the days to come, remember this vow for it is a vow; and warn all others of the danger of coming across my path, in this direction."

"You are speaking seriously now, Lionel, and I will answer you in the same way. I tell you, as a friend, that Stella will never love you, and that you will only give her pain, as well

as yourself, by making any proposals to her. I beg of you to remember this and go no further."

"I think we have talked long enough on this subject," said the young man, laying off his cloak and hat on the hall table. "Perhaps we had better go into the parlor. I will not leave them together any longer, and if you do not go in with me, I shall go in alone."

Josie, seeing that it was useless to reason with him, took him into the parlor, where the lovers were expecting him. Fred rose as they entered, and was presented to Dacy in due form.

"I met Mr. Dacy on the road, when coming here," said Fred. "I did not hope to see him so soon."

"We soldiers see little of the society of ladies," said Dacy, "and you must not blame us if we covet it when it is possible to attain it. It is probable that, in a short time, we shall be away from the Catawba."

"To what command are you now attached?" asked Fred.

"To that of Major Wemys."

"Then I agree with you. Major Wemys will be far from the Catawba before many days."

"How know you that?" demanded the tory, turning sharply upon him. "Are you in the secrets of the army?"

"You are inquisitive," replied Fred. "I am not at liberty to answer your question. You must understand that if, as you say, I knew the secrets of the army, I should not be at liberty to betray them to a third person."

"Right," said the tory. "Again you force me to ask your pardon. Miss Stella, I hope you will excuse my intrusion. I caught some words of Miss Josie's, as I came up, but did not understand them."

"Your excuse is made," said Stella. "I pray you, do not speak of it again."

"I will not," said he. "We have quite a party. Shall we make up a table for whist? What do you say, cousin, shall we make a bank against them?"

"As you please," said Josie. "We must not, however, keep you so late that you can not get back to camp. The service must need you."

At this polite hint that he would not be expected to stay late, Stella smiled, and they took their places at the table—Stella and Fred against the other two.

"Where is your father, Miss Stella?" asked Dacy, as he sorted his cards.

"At the court-house," replied Stella. "He has been gone some days. He has not, in fact, returned since your visit, some days since, which we hardly expected. Indeed, you did not give us time to welcome you."

"You will excuse my haste upon that occasion," said the young man. "My zeal in the service of my king must be my excuse. But I wished to say that your father's visits to the northern towns have at last created suspicion, and Tarleton begins to fear that he has violated his safeguard. I hope it is not so. With the example of one prominent man before him, who has suffered death in the cause, it is to be hoped that he will be careful."

"My father, to say the least, is master of his own actions, and will not shrink from the consequences of the same," said Stella, proudly. "And I say now that I am sorry he ever took a safeguard. Whether he continues to hold it, must remain entirely with himself. He will act like a man."

"Like a man of sense, let us hope," said Dacy. "But, let it pass. It seems strange to me that any man can uphold the cause of rebellion now, when it is evidently on its last legs. A year or two at most will efface the last vestige of resistance from the southern colonies, and we can then turn our undivided attention to the North, where they are even more stiff-necked than they are here. At the least, they fight us in the open field, and don't go to the swamps and woods like alligators, as your Marion and Sumter do."

"Just so; fight you in the open field, and whip you," said Josie archly.

"Where?"

"Have you forgotten Saratoga, Bennington, Fort Schuyler, Stony Point, Ticonderoga? At any place where these men you affect to despise had any thing like your number, they have not failed to fight like men. They were heroes who defended Bunker Hill, greater than these who marched against it."

At this moment they heard the clatter of hoofs, and Josie rose and looked from the window. To her surprise and sorrow, she saw three of the riders of Dacy guarding a prisoner, whom she knew to be the Indian, Jim Lane. The brave fellow had been taken unawares and captured, after killing two of those who assaulted him. Nothing but the large reward offered for his capture saved him from the swinging-limb. Josie called Dacy to the window. He uttered an exclamation of joy and ran down, followed by the others. Jim was seated on a horse, with his legs tied under the animal, and his arms bound behind his back. In addition to this, so good an opinion did his captors have of his powers, they had wound a lariat about his body, from his hips to his shoulders, completely entangling him in its meshes. Jim sat on the horse like a statue, never turning his head, even when Dacy addressed him.

"A sullen hound," muttered Dacy. "I will find a way to loosen his tongue before long. Where did you get him, lads?"

"Down below Fishing Creek," replied one of the swamp-suckers. "He was a-swooping along in the bush, and we was on his back 'fore he c'ud turn. He laid out Bentley and Dangerfield, two of our best men. There is a hundred gold guineas on his head, and he is certain to swing any way, or he wouldn't be hyar, I tell you. 'Twas mighty hard to keep the boys' hands off him. What shill we do with him?"

"Take him to camp."

"If you think we'd better. But I did hear, yesterday, that the old Game Cock was in the saddle ag'in. Wuss still, a fellow from the North has brought the news that the Kentucky and Tennessee whigs have whipped White Horse Ferguson, at King's Mountain, and killed him. I hope 'tain't true."

"What man told you that?" asked Fred eagerly.

"Waal, stranger," said the other, "I don't mind tellin' you, 'cause, if yer a whig yer won't get any news, and ef yer a good sound king's man 'twill make yer feel bad. 'Twill be a hard time with the king's men under Ferguson if 'tis true. 'Twas a man from the north'ard told me."

"Why will our men be in danger?" said Dacy.

"'Cause some on 'em will hev a taste of the rope over a dub. But, cappeen, I think w'd better wait till morning to

take this chap in, and send one of the boys to bring up all the rest, so that we can get him safe to Wemys. He ain't fur off, looking fer Sumter. My 'pinion is, that he'll find him full as soon as he wants him."

"If Miss Stella will allow it," said Dacy, "we will keep this rogue here for the night."

"Dod rot my hide," said the voice of the supposition "George" at this moment, "thet's an Injun, ain't it? Durned ef I ain't beat. I allers thot Injuns hed whiskers, an' this chap's face is as smooth as a knife."

For the first time, the Indian manifested some interest in the proceedings. His eyes began to sparkle, and he turned his head slowly in the direction of the speaker, who had taken this method of putting him on his guard. A single glance from Indian Jim penetrated the disguise, and he knew that he had found friends.

"Who is this fellow?" said Dacy, turning to Fred.

"My servant," answered the young whig; "a faithful fellow. I think you would do well to follow this brave soldier's advice. Place the man in a strong room, and let one of your men stay on guard, and my fellow shall stay with him. Let the other two go to camp and bring up your men. It will be the best way."

"Your advice is good," said Dacy, "and I will act upon it. Harris, you will stay here and guard the prisoner. The others may ride to camp and order my lieutenant to bring on the command at early morning. They may as well come this way to find Wemys. Make haste."

"George," said Stanley, "remember that you are under the orders of this soldier. You will help him to guard the prisoner. And let me especially warn you against the Injuns, for they are rank whigs, and will get this Indian free if they can. You must excuse me, Miss Stella, but I heard that you conspired to set a famous scout free who was confined in this house."

"I did," said Stella. "I am proud of it."

"So am I," said Josie.

"Dod you ever hear such arrant little rebels?" said Stanley, laughing. "The more reason we should take care that you have nothing to do with the prisoner. As you were so

unlucky in regard to the cellar, I think we had better try an upper room this time. Where is that Jupiter? Here, you sooty rascal, this way!"

The old house-servant, who had been watching the progress of affairs throughout, came forward at the summons. He had wit enough to see that Fred desired to appear in the guise of a tory, and had been instructed to call him nothing but Master Fred.

"Have you a strong room in the house, Jupiter?" demanded the young man. "Speak quick! A room strong enough to hold a prisoner."

"Dar's de wine-closet, Marse Fred; dat strong 'nough to hold de debble hisself, an' his horns on an' his hoofs shed wid cast steel!"

"Very good. We will look at this same wine-closet. Lead on, old Thunderbolt!"

"You quit dat, now, Marse Fred," said Jupiter. "You allus pokin' fun at I, 'cause I's brack. Come, now, you stop, or p'raps de funderbolt bust! Yah, yah, yah!"

"Come, show the way, Snowball," cried the impatient Dacy; "Harris, drag along that red imp."

Jim was helped up the stairway with the disguised scout on one side and Harris on the other. Finding the room strong enough, they put him in, locked the door, and left him in charge of the two men. A table was brought out into the hall and placed just in front of the door, and the two sat down to watch. To enliven the night, Jupiter, by order of his mistress, brought up three or four bottles of good wine, and glasses, while the ladies and gentlemen returned to the parlor and again took to their cards.

"A strange interruption," said Stella. "Have you ever seen that Indian before, Captain Dacy? How brave he looked!"

"He is brave," said Dacy, who, being no coward himself, was always ready to give another brave man his just due. "I am not exactly a coward, but I assure you I should not like to be the one to meet that man in battle. I have seen him fight like a demon incarnate, using both hands equally well, and hold his own against half a dozen foes. That was at Fishing Creek, when Tarleton beat Sumter."

"I knew something of his history," said Fred. "It was told me by an officer who had heard it from the lips of his companion in arms, Joe Barnes, the favorite scout of Sumter. Perhaps you have heard of him?"

"I have," said Dacy, a little nettled.

"Would you know him if you met him?"

"We were neighbors once," replied Dacy. "I wish I had him in the same room with his companion."

He did not dream how nearly his wish was realized at that moment; but the recollection brought a smile to the lips of Fred, as he went on with his story. It was growing dark.

"This Indian Jim, is a Choctaw, and his father a chief of the tribe. In one of the excursions of the English into their country, when he was a child, the village was burned and his father killed. His earliest recollection, therefore, is of the 'red coats,' as he calls them, as the murderers of his father. Since that time, he has devoted his life to the service of America, and has fought on their side. 'Tis a brief story, but, while Jim Lane lives, the English have a deadly enemy, who will make his mark by a bloody path."

"He will not trouble us long," said the other. "I wonder how my sergeant and George get on together. I hope they will not get drunk."

A little alarmed at the supposition, he went out into the hall, from which he could see the two guests. They sat face to face, their elbows on the table. Harris was listening, with great interest, to the story which the other was telling. Apparently, neither of them were drinking much, for the bottle stood not more than half empty between them, and he was certain no two bottles of wine would trouble Harris in the least. Dacy went back to the parlor and an hour passed when they heard a step on the stairs. Thinking it one of the servants, Dacy did not raise his head, until a cry from Stella startled him. He looked up. The parlor door was open and in it stood Joe Barnes, with a long pistol in each hand. He had taken the precaution to throw off the disguise, and hide the clothes which he had worn in an upper room.

"The man that stirs," he said, in a calm voice, "dies."

"I know you, Joe Barnes," cried Dacy. "By Heaven, I will not be taken!"

"I do not wish to take you. Let us have a truce. I have set my companion free, and he is here. Let us go in peace and you shall not be molested."

"What have you done with my servant?" said Stanley.

"He jumped out of the window," replied Joe. "You will find him in the woods, probably. The green-coat lies on his back in the hall with his knife-hilt between his teeth. He looks well. When we are gone, you may set him free. Jim, get out the horses. Get the one that servant rode for me. Take Dacy's for yourself. As for this man," pointing to Stanley, "he must come with us."

"I will not," cried Stanley, seeing that he was expected to keep up the farce, and half drawing his sword. "I am a peaceful citizen. I will appeal to Clinton."

"Sumter shall decide that. Get out all the horses. Put up your sword, sir. There is nothing to be gained by resistance. I hold your lives in the barrels of these little weapons, and would require very small inducement to pull the trigger."

"Let us rush upon him," cried Dacy. "We are two to one."

"I am a civilian," said Fred. "I do not feel called upon to risk my life by assaulting this individual, who certainly is very rough in his manners. I must beg of you, sir, not to point the pistol in this direction. I am not used to this kind of threat and incivility, from citizen or soldier."

"So I suppose," said Dacy, with a sneer. "I have no longer need to ask your profession. Oh, that such a *thing* should ever wear a sword."

"Excuse me," said Fred. "In presence of ladies we cannot quarrel. But if you dare to meet me in the place I shall appoint, with sword, dagger or pistol, I am your man. Though a civilian, I was not bred to bear insult from any man."

"Fred Stanley!" cried Josie, "you shall not quarrel with that fellow."

"Stanley!" cried Dacy. "Ah, ha! I have you now. You are a rebel; Sumter's favorite captain. I knew I could not be wrong! I see ~~now~~ why you would not join me in an attack upon your pet scout. The farce is played out. In plain words, what do you propose to do?"

"I did not come here to make prisoners, and shall go back

as I came. All I ask you is that you will not follow us to-night. If you do, the peril be on your own head."

"I promise, seeing that I am at your disposal."

"You will remain here until five o'clock to-morrow morning?"

"Very good, I will."

"Sergeant Barnes, we may trust this gentleman. See if Jim has got out the horses. You know where they are to be found. Countermand your order in respect to Captain Dacy's horse. The one which Jim rode will do."

"Excuse me," said Joe. "That horse is mine. It was stolen from my plantation after I left it, and I can not give aid and comfort to the enemy by leaving him longer in their hands."

"That alters the matter," said the captain. "Since it is your horse, leave one of the others for Captain Dacy's use."

"Again I must beg to be excused," replied Joe. "They are stolen horses, every hoof. The gray which my friend Harris bestrode belonged to Garry Boyd, of your company. He lost him at Fishing Creek, and has been forced to hack a contemptible hack ever since. I consider it no more than justice to a good trooper and staunch whig, to help him to his horse again. The man who claimed the horse which Jim rode being dead, of course we have as good a right to him as any body; but, unfortunately, *he* is stolen, too. You remember that bay which Jerry Thompson rode, which was always kicking up a row in the line? This is the identical horse. *He* must go back, at any rate."

"Have it your own way. Perhaps it is better. The captain will only have to wait for his men. They are coming in the morning," said Stanley.

"The very idea I had all the time," whispered Joe, as they went out together. "He would have been on our cruppers before ten o'clock. You will want to say good-by to Miss Stella. I will go out on the veranda and wait for you."

He found Josie on the veranda. She had darted from the room the moment she could do so with safety, and was waiting for him.

"You must get away from here at once," she said. "You do not know the man you have made angry. He will never rest until he has his revenge."

"I do not fear him," said Joe.

"Where is the soldier?" she asked.

"I broke his head with a wine-bottle before he could utter a cry," answered Joe; "we were very friendly until the blow came, and I may say that he was considerably startled. You will present my compliments to him, the compliments of Mr. Joseph Barnes, and say that I was sorry to be compelled to use him roughly, and that the next time we meet over a bottle of good wine, I will use it in a different manner. But the night is dark, and my worthy captain must not be long in leave-taking. This adventure has hurried our departure. Captain!"

"In a moment, Joseph," said Stanley, who was bidding farewell to Stella in the hall.

"We have strange meetings and partings," said Joe; "always with gleaming weapons and harsh words. I hope the time may come when we can meet in peace. Captain!"

"The Genius of our Liberty calls 'come'!" said the captain, kissing his betrothed. Looking up, he saw the black, vindictive eyes of Dacy bent upon them with such a look that his hand involuntarily dropped to his sword-hilt.

"I shall not quarrel with you to-night," said Dacy. "Go your ways; in the time to come, remember this night."

"Do not mind him," said Josie. "Away with you, for you have far to ride."

They mounted quickly, Joe leading the famous bay, which was fated once more to make trouble in the line of Sumter. As far as the light gleamed, the girls kept them in view. Dacy stood long after, gazing out into the gloom, and then came back to the parlor with a look on his face which they could not fathom.

They found out what it meant in the after days.

CHAPTER VI.

GREATER CRIME.

THE band of Dacy was an independent organization, though it always acted in concert with Tarleton or the other cavalier leaders when they operated against the revolutionists. By his celerity of movement, his skill at hiding from pursuit, and his excesses when upon the trail, Dacy had rendered himself particularly obnoxious to the whig leaders, and they would have rejoiced in the annihilation of his command, more than in the defeat of Tarleton. Many of the deeds imputed to Huck and others were his. Like Marion, he had many retreats in the swamp, to which he fled when closely followed, known but to few. In these retreats he would lie until a chance came to pounce upon a small party of whigs, or to join Tarleton in a ride after Sumter or Marion.

Dacy loved, or thought he loved, Stella Robinson. The next morning, before his troop arrived, he came to her, as she sat alone at the window, and asked her to be his wife. She had expected this for some time, and feared its coming, but her answer was decisive. She could never marry a man without love, nor would she marry a man who consorted with the enemies of his country.

"Think again, Miss Stella," he said; "I want you to be my wife. My love is not the growth of a day; there are strong reasons why you should be my wife. Alas! I had thought of ever marrying the man whom I saw here last night. For his sake as well as your own, I prefer your consent; but, if I can not have it, you shall marry me, whether you will or not."

"You have my answer," replied Stella; "I shall not change it for harsh words, and threats I despise. If I am wronged, there are those who will revenge my wrongs to the last."

"You neglected one reason in saying why you would not marry me—a very prominent reason, I may say. You love that vile traitor to his king, Captain Stanley. I am not blind

that letter which the scout brought was from him. When I came into the room, yesterday, you were sitting as only lovers sit. He kissed you yesterday, and I will kill him for it when we meet, as I am a living man !”

“ Even if what you say is true,” said Stella, “ and remarkable as it may seem, it is so, by what right do you interfere in my affairs, sir ?”

“ I mean to establish a right, foolish girl,” said Dacy. “ Hark !”

She listened, and heard the blast of a bugle, followed by the rush of horses.

“ You hear it,” he said ; “ yonder come my good men, who will be ready to listen to any command I may choose to give. What should hinder me from seizing you now, and taking you to my camp in the swamp ? Once there, none shall know where you are until you are my wife.”

“ You dare not do this.”

“ Don’t put it on my daring. I am a desperate man ; I dare do any thing. Do you not see that it is best to yield ? It is the life of many a thing, to be able to bend with a good grace. Say that you will be my wife and none shall adore you as I shall.”

“ I will *not* ; leave me !”

Dacy stepped to the window. His men were just forming, down by the gate, while his lieutenant had dismounted and was coming up the walk. The captain raised the window and spoke to him.

“ Keep the men in the saddle, Briefly ; we shall not stay here long ; I have determined to go to the swamp. Send one of the men to the stable and get out Miss Robinson’s horse. Now, Miss Josie, what do you want ?”

“ Is he frightening you, Stel ?” said that damsel, who had come in at a side door.

“ He threatens to carry me away to his retreat in the swamp,” said Stella. “ What shall we do ?”

“ I would be pleased to see him do any thing of the kind,” said Josie, wretchedly, taking her cousin by the arm, and drawing her away from the tory.

“ You will have the extreme felicity of seeing me do that very thing in about ten minutes from this time. Put on

your cloak and hat, and pack up such articles of clothing as you need. Don't look so spiteful, Josie, I mean just what I say."

"Oh, you vile coward—you woman-whipper!"

"You are exceedingly complimentary. Now, I think of it, I do not believe it would be safe to leave you here; therefore, you shall go with us. Brierly!"

The lieutenant came to the window.

"Saddle a horse for Miss Josie; she wishes to go with her cousin to the swamp. It is a long time since the Riders have had such good company."

"My friends will repay you fully for this insult. It will be a dear theft for you, Lionel Dacy," cried Stella.

"Your friends will do well not to get in my way," replied Dacy; "but we have no time for bandying words now. Get ready at once."

"If it were not for the look of the thing," said Josie spitefully, "I should like to scratch your eyes out."

"I have no doubt of it," said he, laughing.

"My father will remember this treatment."

"Your father is in prison at Charleston, and his chances of escape are very poor indeed; he did not make a good rebel. Here, men, some of you take these young ladies out, and put them into their saddles. Don't scream, or we shall be forced to gag you."

"Your colonel shall hear of this outrage."

"My colonel is a sensible man. He cares very little what we do with rebels. Besides, I very much fear that you would not be able to find a messenger."

The girls seeing that it was useless to resist, suffered themselves to be led out, and were quickly mounted on the horses stolen from Mr. Robinson's stables.

Before they moved off, Stella addressed her captor:

"Remember this, Lionel Dacy. I would die now rather than be your wife. Put upon me what indignity you may, threaten as you will, I will destroy myself sooner than be yours. For the traitor to his country I feel only feelings of disgust, and I heartily despise you. But, for the man who tears me from my home, I only feel a most unutterable longing. Go on, sir; I am in your power bodily; but in soul, I am as far from you as light is from darkness."

At this moment a flame broke out from the interior of the house.

"What is the matter?" cried Josie, pointing to the house.
"It is on fire."

"I am very much afraid that it is," answered Dacy.
"Boys, how could you be so careless? you have dropped a spark somewhere."

The "boys" answered with a shout of derision, and the girls saw that the more valuable effects were packed upon horses ready for removal. The burning of the house had been decided on long before.

"Wretch!" moaned Stella. "Why do you destroy my home?"

"It is your own work," answered he. "Ride on."

The troop began its march. For a little time they kept to the beaten track, and then turned aside into the swamp. Here they had to give all their skill to the task of keeping their seats. Over logs and brush they now made way, sometimes wading in dark but shallow pools, under boughs which bent so low that their garments brushed them as they passed. Huge old trees were about them, heavy with the moss of centuries—old patriarchs, who had seen the summers come and go, through many weary years. It was broad daylight, and yet so uncertain was the way, that they could scarcely see the path. Sometimes the sun shone brightly for a moment. The next, they plunged into deeper gloom.

After an hour spent in threading the intricate mazes of the swamp, they waded a pool whose waters were a foot in depth, and mildly suggestive of leeches and terrapins, and struck a harder path, upon which the marks of horses' feet were plainly visible. This path was followed half a mile, when they came into one of those beautiful openings, so common in the southern lowlands. It had, evidently, long been used as a camp for the band, for several small log huts were built in the center for the accommodation of the men. Pickets were driven around the edges for the horses.

Dacy urged his horse toward one of the most pretentious of the huts, and dismounting offered to assist Stella. Declining his proffered aid, she slipped to the ground. Josie already was on her feet, and the two followed him into the hut, obeying the motion of his hand.

"This must be your home for a time. I trust not long, for I am in a hurry. Make yourselves as comfortable as you can."

Comfortable!

He went out, and the girls were left alone. They did the most natural thing under the circumstances, got hold of each other's hands, laid their heads upon each other's shoulder, and had a real, good, refreshing crying-spell. This done, they looked over their prospects, satisfied that they were about as bad as bad could be. What hope had they of escape? They remembered the intricate windings of that path. How could any aid reach them?

A wrinkled old negress brought in their dinner, consisting of fried bacon and corn-cakes. Hungry in spite of their fears, even these coarse viands were very acceptable, and they made a hearty meal, after which Josie was heard to declare that it was a romantic thing to be carried off by robbers in that way.

"Robbers, Miss Josie?" said Dacy, entering at this moment.

"Why yes, *robbers!* Or, perhaps, you like the name of bandits better? Your chivalrous conduct is worthy of the highest praise of brigands. And then you are so gallant! You keep prisoners so well! are so considerate, and courteous!"

"Confound her!" muttered the discomfited man. "With nothing stop her tongue?"

"My poor tongue! It will say things that do not please Captain Lionel Dacy. What a lover you are! What strong arguments you use to show us that we are in your power. Go!" The tone of the brave girl changed. "You are a loathsome *thing*, out of the ban of pity. If you are a *man*, set us at liberty. Undo this wrong; or, as I am a prophet, you shall heap upon yourself a condemnation through all the after days, that would make a statue shrink."

He laughed, a low, bitter, scornful laugh.

"Preach not to me, Josie Central. I have no quarrel with you, and would not have brought you where you could strike me with that infernal tongue of yours, at every opportunity, but that I feared to leave you at the plantation. As soon as Stella is my wife, you shall be at liberty."

"I hope you will not keep me as long as that," said Josie;

"for if Stella keeps her word, I shall be an old maid by that time, and I *should* so hate to be an old maid!"

"I hope that she will not be obstinate," he said. "It will be bad for all concerned. However, we will not speak of that. You are safe here, and I am going into the field."

"May some well-aimed bullet lay you low!" said Josie. "And yet that is wrong. You are not fit to die. Do not go to battle any more. Disband this villainous troop; set us at liberty, and try, by good deeds, to make up for the evil you **have done.**"

"Enough of this," he replied, angrily. "We are off after Samter, the Game Cock. Wemys has sent for me. When I return, I hope to find that you have made up your mind that marriage with me is better than captivity."

"I shall not change my mind," said Stella, "if I never again leave this fearful place. I would as soon consent to **wed a viper.**"

He turned angrily away, and went out into the camp, where the band were cooking their dinners under the trees. He sat down apart from the rest, wondering what it could be that prompted him to listen to the words of Josie, and set the girls at liberty. It was the man's better angel, hovering near him, before it took its reluctant flight for ever. Perhaps his sadness was the foreshadowing of a coming fate. Who could tell?

CHAPTER VII.

MORAL SUASION.

THE rescued scouts rode all night, and came up with Samter on the upper Catawba, when they apprised him of the coming of Major Wemys. It was determined to put the two scouts upon the trail of Dacy, whom Samter had determined to hunt out, and meet the attack of the British when they chose to come. The result of that attack is well known. Wemys was defeated and taken prisoner. But our story has more directly to do with the fortunes of the scouts.

They crossed the river on foot, keeping under the shadow of the trees, for the country was full of the rough riders of Tarleton and the tory cavalry, whose excesses were beyond the power of pen to describe. Woe to the whig whom they found! A rope, time for a hasty prayer, and the riders would go on, leaving the body of the doomed one swaying in the breeze, from the limb of some forest tree. The two scouts hurried on, expecting every moment to see the white walls of the house gleaming through the trees.

"We are near the house," said the scout with a puzzled look as they came to the edge of the woods. "It is strange I can not see it."

"Wigwam gone somewhar!" said Jim, with a laugh.

They stepped quickly out of the bushes into the open ground where the old mansion had stood. Instead, they saw blackened walls, smoking in places, while timbers, iron and stone were mixed in inextricable confusion. Both uttered an exclamation of dismay. The tories had done their work well. Nothing pleased these vandals so well as such destruction. The two men had often looked upon such sights, but never upon one which struck such a pang to their hearts.

"Alas! alas!" cried Joe. "Who has done this?"

Regardless of danger, the two men rushed from the cover and stood beside the ruined home. Was the work before them accident? Did the bones of the two who had saved him from death whiten under the flaming timbers? In that moment, this brave man knew how dear Josie had grown to his heart. I think the Indian understood why the lips of his friend grew white, for he turned aside a little, so as not to intrude upon his sorrow. As he did so, something stirred the bush by his side. Drawing his hatchet, he reached the spot with a bound, dragging out a young negro, whom both remembered to have seen loafing in front of the house when they sought a hiding-place there. He was in an extremity of terror. His white teeth rattled together like castanets.

"Don't 'e, don't 'e! Marse Injin, I'se nuffin' but a poor nigger. 'Tain't no manner of use for ye to scalp me. Don't 'e!"

"Who did this?" thundered Barnes, seizing the boy by the arm. "Speak quick!"

"I tell. Two, tree lays ago, mornin' after you run away, —ki, how you scar dat tory, dough!—Marse Dacy tek Miss Stel' and Miss Josie, and put dem on hoss, an' tek 'em away off. Den dey set fire to de house, an' burn him all up."

Joe gave a little sigh of relief. They were safe at least, although in the hands of those worse than fiends. But, there was hope to save them yet.

"Which way did they go?"

The lad pointed out de course taken, and said, "Dey've gone into de swamp, I mos' know."

Joe beckoned the Indian to his side.

"Come," he said, "we must save those girls if it is possible. Will you follow me, Jim?"

The Indian pointed forward with his hatchet. "Go on," he said, "I have taken the hatchet in my hand, and it goes not back to my belt until the white squaws are free from the claws of the hawk, or the wolves howl above the body of a brave. Let Joe lead, if he can, where Jim Lane dare not follow."

The scout pressed the hand of the other firmly, and then, side by side, they started out upon the trail. It was broad and plain, and they went on with the peculiar half run, half walk, which the young white had learned from the Indian. Soon they struck the edge of the swamp; there the way grew more difficult. Every tussock was carefully examined. They traced the hoof-prints on the muddy edges of the stagnant pools, and steadily persevered in their search.

Night found them far upon the trail. They rested upon one of the dry openings we have mentioned, wrapping their blankets about them and lying down to rest, as calmly, and sleeping as sweetly, as they would have done in their homes. The moon came out in her splendor, and shone on the faces of the brave men periling life for the sake of those who had known them scarcely two days.

With the first gray of morning, they were tightening their belts preparatory to plunging into the swamp, when they heard the sound of horses' feet splashing through the mire. Each, by a sudden impulse, clasped a small tree near at hand, and they were quickly hidden in the branches. Scarcely were they out of sight, when the bushes parted, and three horsemen

rode into the opening. They were members of Dacy's gang, who had been sent by him on an errand.

"Stop a moment," said one, drawing reins under the very tree in which Joe was perched. "I want to tighten my girths. Plunging in this infernal mud is hard on the leathers."

By some unlucky chance, as Joe bent forward to get a view of the last speaker the little branch on which he was seated parted with a loud snap, and he fell through the branches, landing upon his feet, within a few feet of the man who was tightening his girths. To draw a pistol, and clap it to the head of this personage, was the work of a moment.

"Cover those fellows with your rifle, Jim," shouted the scout.

There was no answer, but a dark ball descended upon the head of one of the horsemen, dashing him senseless to the earth. It was the body of the Indian dropping from the bough on which he had been seated. He cast one look at the fallen man, satisfied himself that he could do no mischief for some moments, and then turned upon the second of their foes, who, thunderstricken by the sudden appearance of the scouts, sat in his saddle, as utterly devoid of powers of locomotion as the statue of Jackson at the Capitol.

"You give up?" inquired Jim, tenderly, at the same time throwing his hatchet over his shoulder, preparing for a cast. The tory understood the motion. He threw up his hands in token of surrender. The lariats were brought into play, and the three men were bound tightly. Then Barnes improvised gags, and the thing was done. The horses were led away and tied under the trees. Two of the men were carried to the same spot. The gag was removed from the mouth of the third, and a species of inquisition began.

"Where is the camp of Lionel Dacy?"

No answer. But the lips were compressed firmly.

"You won't tell?"

No answer.

"Stand about twelve paces to the front, Jim, and draw your hatchet. I am going to count ten. At the word ten, you will throw the hatchet at his head, if he has not agreed to answer my questions and to tell the truth."

Jim took his stand, and poised the hatchet ready for a throw. "Me ready!" he said.

"One!" said Joe.

"I'll never tell."

"Two!"

"Do your worst, rebel!"

"Three!"

"You may count, and be cursed to you!"

"Four!"

"What do you want, any how?"

"Five!"

"I won't be a traitor."

"Six!"

"Dacy would kill me,"

"Seven!"

"Would you murder me?"

"Eight!"

"Take away that devil's hatchet."

"Nine!"

"Take it away, and I'll tell you all."

"Put up your hatchet, Jim; this fellow is coming to his senses. Now, sir, answer my questions, and for your own sake, don't lie to me."

The man was thoroughly scared, and pointed out a narrow path which would take them more quickly to the swamp retreat. He stated that they had been sent out by Dacy to bring in a Justice, who lived on the Court House Road, to marry him and Stella. After he had told all, he was gagged and left with his friends. Then the twain came out of a thicket of the prisoners, and Joe took his comrade by the hand.

"Look you, Jim, you must go back to the camp. The men must move to-day. If you meet them it will be near Robertsen's. Get help, and bring them into the swamp. You know the way now. Blaze the trees as you go out. I must watch these poor girls; and, by my life, if these dogs offer to injure them, I will go at them alone!"

The Indian simply wrung the hand of his friend, and then dashed off into the forest; while the hardy scout went to the bound men, and took the gags from their mouths. He then

emptied nearly all the contents of his haversack near them knowing that they would find a way to eat, if they grew hungry, without the use of their hands. Then he looked at his arms, shook down the priming, put new caps on his pistols, loosened his knife in his belt, and took the path toward the rebel camp.

It was a bad time for scouting, for it was bright daylight.

He soon trod the hard ground of the island, and then through the bushes that girdled the opening, he looked in upon the camp.

Beholding Dacy moving about among the men, he fingered the hilt of his knife savagely. He had no pity for the man who had torn those two innocent maidens from their homes, and applied the torch to that home before their very eyes. Eager to immolate him on the altar of vengeance, the scout yet was patient, and waited.

He kept his eyes upon the huts, one of which, he knew, held his treasure. He was rewarded, after a while, for Josie came out for a moment, and looked about her. He longed to get near her, to whisper in her ear, to tell her that a friend was near. He could see that her face was very sad, and she cast troubled looks toward the main path.

Dacy came up and spoke to her. She seemed to make some request, for he nodded, as if in assent. She went into the hut, and soon reappeared, accompanied by Sella. The two then walked, arm in arm, across the island, and cast themselves disconsolately down upon the sward, not ten feet from the spot where the scout lay.

Here was a chance he had not dreamed of. The bushes under whose shadow they were seated were a spur of the copse in which he lay. Crawling silently up until he could have touched them with his hand, he yet feared to speak lest they should scream, and so thwart all his purposes.

He looked out toward the camp. The persons nearest to him were the horseguards, who were perhaps thirty yards away.

"Hist!" he whispered.

Both heard him, and suppressed a scream nobly.

"Don't look excited. It is I, Joseph Barnes," he said, in the same suppressed tone.

A rosy flush mounted to Josie's cheek. It was pleasant to know that the scout cared enough for her to labor for her safety.

"Don't look behind you," he whispered again. "Seem to talk to each other, and answer my questions. Are you in any danger for to-day?"

"He has sent for a Justice," returned Josie, "and says Stella shall marry him when he comes."

"He won't come, I have muzzled his messengers, and he will not get the Justice to-day, at least. So you need have no fear on that score. Do you have a guard at night?"

"Yes. One at the door, and one at the window," replied Josie, who had been looking for means of escape.

"I will try to creep up to-night and talk to you."

"No you won't," shouted a rough voice at his side. "We will give you quarters for the night."

The girls sprang up with a shriek. The sound of blows and a terrible struggle, came out of the bushes behind them. Joe had been suddenly assailed by the three men whom he had let bound in the opening. With a herculean effort, he freed one arm from the grasp of one of the men, and felled him to the earth, as if he had held a hatchet in his hand.

The two remaining clung to him like leeches, calling for help. The blows of the disengaged right hand fell like iron upon their heads. Joe had felled the last to the earth, and looked up, only to find himself environed by a crowd of his foes. Beset as he was, this brave man did not hesitate, and even in this great extremity, his fortitude wrought an admiring cry, even from his enemies. For he stood with his pistols in his hands, defying them. The 2 they rushed upon him in a body. Twice the pistols cracked and then, borne down under the weight of human bodies, he had to yield to his fate. And the pang which suffering could never have extorted from him, was given by the thought that now he could not be of service to those to whom he had consecrated his service.

He was wounded; the blood was dripping down from the tips of his fingers, and yet a muscle of his face did not move. Day came out of the crowd with a look of triumph on his face, and taunted him with his approaching fate. He spoke of

the rope which waited for him, of the bare limb of the great tree in the center of the island ; yet the scout heard him with a quiet smile.

"I am in your hands," he said, "you can do with me as you please : it is your fortune to take me, my fate to be taken. I have tried to meet my fortune as a brave man may, and you will bear me witness, if I die by your hands, that I have sold my life well."

"Where is the Indian?"

"Find out."

"If you hope for mercy, tell me where he is hidden."

"I do not hope for mercy, and therefore I shall do nothing of the kind. I will vouchsafe this information, though ; he is not now in the swamp, and if you want him, you have some miles to travel."

"Why do you not call a surgeon, and dress his wound ; do you not see the blood dripping from his hand?" Jessie had pressed into the circle, and taken Dacy by the arm.

"It will hardly pay, good coz, as I intend to hang him in the morning. Brierly, do me the favor to escort these ladies back to their room ; this is no place for them. Maxwell, come and see to this fellow's arm. It won't do for him to bleed to death, as we want him to die hard to-morrow morning."

The girls were led away to their prison, where they threw themselves into each others arms, sobbing as though they already looked on the dead body of the bold scout. It added to their grief to know that they had brought this sorrow upon him. They thought of the noble single-minuteness which had made him turn aside from his legitimate work, to fight in the cause of the weak and oppressed, and they, powerless to aid him, now that he was in the hands of his foes.

They heard the shouts of his captors as he was hurried past the window to his prison, and could not resist the temptation to look once more upon his face. His garments were torn with knives ; a bloody bandage was upon his arm and wrist ; but he marched by with a haughty step, never turning his head as the rabble howled in his ears. He looked up as he passed their window and smiled as he saw the wan, tearful

yet beautiful faces looking out upon him. Yes, he smiled amid the curses and blows of his infuriated enemies, as one who did not care for such things, and bore them as in duty bound.

Thrusting the scout into one of the smaller huts, three stern sentinels took their place all about it. A wholesome fear impressed them that the cunning of their prisoner would be more than a match for their watchfulness; and so, through all that weary night, he lay bound hand and foot; his wounds throbbing and burning under the painful ligatures. He had no hope now but in the labor of Jim Lane. If he came in time, there was hope; if he came not, good-by to life with the morning! He did not hope that they would spare him. Three dead bodies were ranged side by side upon the green turf that afternoon, while their comrades silently dug three graves, and laid them therein, vowing vengeance on their slayer in the morning.

No, he had no hope from their mercy; but only in the speed of the Indian and his friends.

A weary night! He could not stir from his recumbent position. If he did move, a stern, "Lie down!" from the guard, and the rattling of a piece as it was brought to a level, warned him back into his place. He knew that the tory renegade would shoot him through the heart with few scruples, if he disobeyed.

By and by his thoughts grew bitter, as the hopelessness of his position dawned upon him; he did not feel it so much for himself, but he knew that the fate of the poor girls, without a protector, must be a sad one; and, in his grief, he was almost tempted to start up and dare the sentry to do his worst.

So the hours passed. Toward morning he fell into a troubled doze. The gray light was streaming through the clinks of his log prison when he woke.

CHAPTER VIII.

BLACKSTOCKS

WEMYS, utterly defeated and himself taken prisoner, sent a messenger to Tarleton, ostensibly to treat for an exchange, but in reality to inform him of the whereabouts of the Gamecock. The action had taken place at Broad River. Immediately after the repulse, Sumter left this place, taking his prisoner with him.

But, the active Tarleton was already in the saddle, in close pursuit. Wemys was a man particularly obnoxious to the Americans, as he had superintended the hanging of Adam Cusack, that martyr in the cause of independence. In his pockets were found memoranda of several houses burned by his command, and of others doomed to the flames. In spite of this, he was treated without harshness by the Americans. When the messenger from Wemys reached Tarleton, the troop lay inactive; but immediately sent an express in search of Dacy, with orders to meet him on Broad River at once. The expressman, a born swamp-sucker, well knew the way to the camp of the Riders. He arrived in an opportune moment for the captive girls. Dacy had sent out the men again, and captured a tory Justice of the Peace much against his will; but had given Stella until the next day to consider whether she would marry him of her own accord, or do so by force, as he was determined to marry her at all hazards. First an execution and then a marriage were the orders for the morrow. The day had passed, and only a night intervened when the messenger came. Dacy was angry, but knew better than to slight the orders of Tarleton, who was very severe with any of his officers who did not obey his orders to the letter.

In half an hour the Riders were in the saddle, and threading the mazes of the swamp, ready and eager for battle. They had all confidence in Tarleton, who had never yet been beaten. But fate had set it in her book that Sumter should this day repay the slaughter and rout at Fishing Creek. At Broad

River the command came up with that of Tarleton, and they moved forward together on the course which they knew that Sumter had taken. A few miles from Tiger River they met a countryman, riding a most disconsolate-looking nule—a dejected animal, with hardly spirit enough to keep up his ears. The countryman himself was a study. Accustomed as the British colonel was to meeting nondescripts, this one beat them all. A long, lank, hungry-looking man, who seemed to have lately lost his last friend without the most remote hope of recovery. His hair was of a fiery red—so very red as to give his head the appearance of being surrounded by a flaming circle. His mouth was of vast dimensions, and he had a pair of feet at which a shoemaker would stand aghast. The advance brought this remarkable person in, and Tarleton halted his column, to question him.

"What is your name, fellow?" he said, quickly. "Answer. Dont keep me waiting."

"Name?" said the fellow, helplessly. "To be sure. I hev got a name, hav'nt I? Durned ef it ain't pretty nigh shaken out of me, I've had so much trouble to-day, fust and last. Who be you?"

"I asked your name!" cried Tarleton. "You will do well to let me know it at once."

"'Tain't much of a name," said he. "I ain't hed much call to use it any how. Down here in the swamp nobody don't call me nothing but Zeb. Ef so be yer any way partic'lar yer kin call me Zeb Stone. That's my name."

"Very well, then. Now listen to me. You will understand that I never dally with any one. I am going to ask you a few questions, to which I require a definite answer."

"A *what*?"

"A definite answer."

"Now yer hev got me. I ain't no schollard, durned ef I be. Tain't no hev got book-larnin may cipher that out. I kain't do that."

"I mean that I want you to tell me, without any falsehood, where to find Sumter and his gang?"

"Now ef yer ain't about as hard on a feller as any man I ever see. Who be yer, I should like to know?"

"My name is Bannister Tarleton."

"Tarleton! Oh Lord!" The fellow bounded at least a foot from the saddle. "Yer don't say! Let me go! I ain't well! I don't believe I car about staying here! Tell them sojer men ter git eout of my way, cause this yer male is so durned contrary that he wouldn't turn out for Lord Cornwallis."

"Wait a moment," said Tarleton, drawing a pistol from the holster, with a cruel smile on his hard face; "not so fast. If you attempt to stir from this spot I will leave you for the beasts of the field to make a meal on."

"I never was borned to be et by a turkey buzzard," whined the swamp-sucker. "Now don't; darn it, don't; I ain't use' to it. I'm afraid of fire-arms. I never seen only one till these yer war times. I wish I'd a stayed in the swamp. I'm a little afraid of you, too. I don't like yer much if yer stop me, but ef yer let me go I'll think leaps on yer. I will, sure."

"Quiet your tongue, you *donkey*!" said Tarleton menacing him with the pistol, "or I will shoot you through the head, at once. You are in no danger whatever if you answer my question. Have you seen Sumter and his gang?"

"I don't like him one identicle bit more than I do you, darn it," said Zeb. "And I tell yer he is just as will to see yer as yer are to see him. Would'nt I like to set on a high tree and watch while yer was a cutting into one another! I'd say, 'Fight, hedgehog! Fight, pole-cat! I don't car' which whips! Yer an ornery set of cusses any way!'"

"I'll saddle a higher horse for you than any you ever rode, my talkative friend," said the colonel, "if you don't let me know at once if you have seen Sumter."

"I hev that. Darn him for a hard rider! I seen him just this side of the Tiger, camped. He used me mighty rough, I reckon. I've hed a tussle with a *b'ar*, and I've had a turn-up with a wildcat; but darn me ef I would't do it all over ag'in, sooner than meet Sumter when he's mad. He's lookin' fer ye, mind."

"He will find me soon enough," said Tarleton. "How many men do you suppose he had?"

"A powerful heap, I reckon."

"Answer as to the number. Was it a hundred?"

"Mighty fly! I should rather reckon so. Yer will find out before long."

"Turn about with us and show us where the fellow is lying."

"Turn! Yer don't think that I could *turn* this yer mule, when he's once set his head toward home? I *kain't* do it."

Without a word, Tarleton signaled his orderly, who passed his sword through the saddle girths of the man, so that his saddle turned with him and he slipped to the ground. At a motion from the imperious hand of the British colonel, a trooper seized the fellow by the collar and lifted him to the saddle before him. The bugles were silent, for there was no telling what scouts might be lurking in ambush, and the troop moved forward at a sharp trot, Dee riding in front with his men as the advance guard. The enforced guide did not cease to protest against his abduction until stopped by the soft solicitation of a pistol. Being, as he had said, opposed to fire-arms upon principle, he became silent at last, and submitted to his fate.

"Remember," said Tarleton, who rode at his side, "the moment you play us false you will be shot through the head. Digby!"

"Yes, your honor," said the subaltern, saluting.

"This is your duty. If that fellow leads us on a wrong scent, when you see me lift my hand with a handkerchief in it, in this manner," saying the action to the word, "you will kill him, and drop the body under the feet of the horses. That is the way we deal with traitors in my command."

"But look, yer, Mister, I don't know how *many* Sumter he's with him. I only know *whar* he is. If I bring yer *whar* yer kin find him, that's enough, ain't it?"

"Yes; do this and you shall be safe. Are we near the place, now?"

"'Bout a mile."

"What did Sumter say to you?"

"He asked me if I had heard any thing of Tarleton. I told him yes; I heard that he cut Buford all to pieces at Wax-haw. That didn't seem to please him much, and then I told him that I *heard* tell how he licked the Game Cock at Fishing

Creek. That made him madder than ever, you see, though I didn't go for to do it."

Tarleton smiled for the first time that day, but it was a cruel smile, as he always wore when going into battle. War was a passion with him. He loved it, and was not a man, but a very fiend, when the thirst for blood was on him.

"Halt!" was the order passed along the line. They stood fast, and the advance came back and fell into their appointed places on the flanks of the column. Then, at the word, they pushed forward, while the colonel spoke to Dacy.

"Is our information right?"

"Yes," said Dacy. "The Game Cock is brought to bay."

"Drop that fellow, Digby, and let him get out of the way. Here, sir, take that in payment."

Tarleton tossed him a purse containing a number of guineas. The fellow seized them and plunged into the bushes. Hardly had he done so, when a rifle cracked, and the man called Digby fell from his saddle, dead. The shot was fired at Tarleton, who had, at that moment, reined in his horse to take a look at the woods which they were nearing, which brought him on a line with the body of the unfortunate soldier.

"That pays for my mule!" shouted a voice, marvelously like that of the man who had just left them. "Give it to them, lads! Tarleton's quarters. Hurrah for the bold riders of Sumter!"

At the command, a volley was poured in which emptied several saddles. The English were now in the very midst of the thicket, and the partisans surrounded them on every side. Before they recovered from the first panic, a second fierce volley riddled them through and through. They were brave men, however, and pressed on resolutely, driving the advance of Sumter from the thicket. The man who had so cleverly led the enemy to this point was Lieutenant Harlinge, of the rifles, a very Whigton in command of his own features, and capable of taking any disguise at a moment's warning. He had volunteered to go out and pilot Tarleton to Blackstocks. How well he succeeded we have already seen. His company of rifles was concealed in the bushes, at the very spot to which he had led them, and his hand was the first to fire a shot

which had nearly immolated Tarleton, and would have done so but for the luck which followed him through all his battles.

Following his lead, Tarleton's troops dashed over the first obstruction, and found that Sumter had driven stakes into the ground in front of his cavalry, with the points outward, to keep off the charge, and had dismounted a large part of his own force to act as riflemen. A volley at close quarters was now fired, which was more than the troops of Tarleton could bear, and they hastily retired from the ground, leaving many a comrade gasping on the sod. Tarleton followed, mad with vexation, calling on his men to turn, to strike once more for the honor of old England, to remember the battles they had won, and not lose all now. So great was his influence over them that they paused, at last formed, and followed him back. They broke down the pickets and were pushing through into the intrenched camp when, for the first time, the cavaliers of Sumter sprung to their saddles and charged.

Where was the boasted prowess of the British dragoons in that hour? They fell like ripe grain under the sabers of the despised rebels. The biter was bitten and the rout at Fishing Creek fully avenged. In the *mêlée* Stanley, charging the British at the head of his troops, met Lionel Dacy. They dashed at each other, fury blazing in the eyes of both. A savage joy flashed out from the gleaming orbs of Dacy as they crossed swords, for he was master of his weapon. But, before either could strike a blow, the rush of contending parties separated them, and others pushed in between.

"We shall meet again," hissed Dacy, shaking his sword at the young captain over the heads of the intervening men.

"On any ground," replied the other, cutting down a tory in his path, "with any weapon, sword, dagger or pistol, I will meet you joyfully."

The rout was complete, and was the first of that series of reverses which broke down the prestige which had crowned the British arms. Tarleton, by dint of hard riding, saved himself and a portion of his command.

Sumter was severely wounded—so badly that he was removed from the field in a hide freshly stripped from a dead beast. This wound kept the brilliant partisan officer from the

field for some months. His good conduct on several occasions had earned for him the thanks of Congress, and had animated the militia at times when they were most depressed. Occurring so soon after the defeat of Gates at Camden, this conflict went to show that there was yet vitality enough in the men of the South to defeat the British. Dacy fled with Tarleton, but left him at the Catawba, and once more buried himself in the swamp.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRIAL.

Moody and discontented, Dacy made his way to the island. He found all safe. The prisoner had made no attempt to escape, and the girls had remained quietly in the hut. Perhaps the person who was really in the least trouble made the most fuss, and that was the justice who had been seized to perform the ceremony between the tory and Stella. He had passed the time of Dacy's absence in calling down maledictions on the heads of each and all of the tories, from Lionel Dacy down to the black cook. He threatened the vengeance of the State upon the heads of those who had insulted the ruling powers in the person of their officer.

"Sir!" said he, coming up to Dacy, very red in the face, "do you happen to know who I am? Are you aware that my name is Justice Carter, and that I am justice of the peace for this township?"

"Certainly I do," said the tory. "If I had not been aware of that fact, you may rest assured that I should not have brought you here."

"In that case, sir," said the pompous representative of the law, "allow me to inquire what you mean by bringing me to this place and keeping me here against my will?"

"I have already told you that I need your services. If you had not troubled me by this intrusive questioning, I should have been done with you to-day. But, I have

concluded to put off the ceremony until after the conviction and punishment of a spy now in my hands."

"And what am I to do in the mean time? Are you aware that my business needs my presence, and that every hour you keep me here is with heavy loss to myself?"

"You shall not lose money by me," said Dacy. "What do you suppose the loss to your business will be in all, if you were to remain here until the end of the week?"

"How much?" said the justice, with a sly grin. "That depends upon the way you put it. You have some work for me to do; I expect pay for that. Then if the work is contrary to my feelings, which I am afraid it will be, I shall expect pay for *that*. Again, you must bear in mind that the country is getting more quiet, and the young men are thinking of getting married, and I am losing a great deal in marriage fees."

"Would a hundred pounds make it right?"

"Sterling?"

"Yes."

"Yes, I think I could make it do. Will you give me that amount?"

"If you will promise not to take any notice of any little hesitation on the part of the young lady whom I am to marry, but go on with the ceremony as if nothing happened."

"In that case, say twenty-five pounds more."

"Done."

"Then I will marry you to her. Any little hesitation! Ha, ha, ha! How comical you are. Well, I will not stop you. When will the ceremony be performed?"

"When I have done the business of my spy, who must be waiting for my coming. Good-day, sir."

Joe was lying in his prison, calmly waiting for the return of the tory from his battle, and was not surprised when the door opened and Dacy, followed by two officers of his troop, entered the room.

"What do you want here?" said Joe. "Play the farce out as soon as you can. I am tired of lying here."

"Do you not shrink, Joseph Barnes, when you think of the fate which is in store for you?"

"No," replied Barnes, proudly. "I have fought battles

and met death in all its forms, and it is nothing new when a South Carolina tory murders a South Carolina whig."

"We have determined to give you a trial," said Dacy. "We murder no man. You shall have fair play. I do not think it will be hard to condemn you."

The guard was called in, who unbound the prisoner, and he rose to his feet. Looking round him, he saw that the door was open, and that the sentry outside was pacing another way. It occurred to him that there was no time like the present, and he made a break for the door, bowling the unlucky guard over like a ten-pin. The young ladies, who happened to be at their door, caught a passing glimpse of him as he flew by, followed by the shots and shouts of the tories. Dacy fired two pistol-balls at him as he ran, and joined in the pursuit. In a moment the camp was deserted, every tory being upon the trail of the scout, who had gained the swamp in safety. Even the man who had been set to look after the girls, joined in the pursuit. That was the moment for Josie. Seizing the hand of her cousin, she began to lead her away from the swamp island, by one of the forest paths.

"What are you thinking of?" said Stella. "We shall be lost in the swamps."

"Which would be better, Stella, to die in the swamp, or to stay here to be the plaything of that villain, who will end his life by hemp or steel some day, I am sure?"

"The swamp!" cried Stella. "Go on; I will follow you wherever you may go."

On they went, over the slimy logs, through stagnant pools, startling the terrapin from the logs, hearing the dismal notes of the owl, flitting through the cover, until they came out again into the light of day upon another swamp island, somewhat larger than the one they had left. Tired, breathless, for they had wandered for more than two hours in the jungle, they sunk down upon the earth and panted for breath. It was a beautiful spot. A soft and verdant sward covered the earth, and overhead the branches interlocked, forming a verdant canopy.

"Oh, Josie," said Stella, "I am dying, I think. What is the matter with me?"

"It's nothing at all," gasped the irrepressible Josie, "nothing whatever. We are only tired a little. Lie down and rest. This is a beautiful place. Only hear those fellows!"

The shouts of the swamp-suckers could be heard at intervals, as they scattered in pursuit of the daring scout, who was, evidently, leading them a long chase, as they had gone in nearly the opposite direction to the course which Barnes had taken, and less likely to be found for the same reason. Completely worn out, they wound their arms about one another, lay down upon the greensward, and soon fell asleep, hearing no longer the cries of the pursuers, though they still were loud in the miry fastnesses.

Half an hour passed, and a man came through the thick underbrush which lined the island, and found them lying there, fast asleep. It was the scout, flying from his relentless pursuers. He paused in surprise as he saw the girls, whom he supposed safe on the other island. He smiled as he thought that this was the work of Josie, always ready to seize the first opportunity for escape. The erratic course which he had run, being hard pressed by the enemy, had brought him to this place. On first leaving the island, he had held his course to the west for some time, until satisfied that the enemy were upon three sides and that he had no recourse but to break off toward the south. In crossing a piece of level ground he encountered the tory Harris, who had, with true swamp-sucker instinct, struck out by himself in the direction which he supposed would bring him to the line which the escaped prisoner would be compelled to take.

This Harris was one of the worst of his class. He had been with Tarleton for a time, but was transferred at his own desire to the troop of Dacy. A single incident in his life will show his character. At Fishing Creek, a company of Sumter's dismounted riflemen were posted in a cornfield and defied the efforts of the enemy to dislodge them. The British charged three times, and as many times were sent back. While they were forming for another attack, the riflemen got to their horses and fled, for the day was lost irrecoverably. As the cavalry charged over the ground where many of their own men were lying, a whig, who had been left dead upon the field, raised himself upon his elbow, and begged for

quarter. They gave it to him, *Tarleton's quarters*. This man Harris, raising himself in his stirrups, cut through the uplifted hand into his skull, and brought him to the ground. Joe Barnes found him afterwards, but he had nothing coherent to say, babbling painfully of "Mother! home!" His murderer was the man who met the bold scout upon that narrow piece of dry land, not fifty feet in circumference. Joe had no arms, and Harris had nothing but his rifle, for he had laid all the rest aside, because they encumbered him in his rapid course. He uttered a yell of delight, as he saw the scout, and rushed at him. The nature of the man was bloody. He delighted in fighting, and the stronger his opponent was, the better he liked it. He was broad-shouldered, with extraordinary muscular development, and possessed the agility of a mountain-cat. They grasped each other in true wrestler style, by the shoulder and elbow, and stood eyeing each other keenly, waiting for a trip. Harris realized that his work was cut out for him, for Joe Barnes was known as a wrestler in all that country, where to be a good wrestler was part of the education of a young man. Harris was no tyro in this sort of work, but Joe had a little the advantage in light.

"Fair play?" said Harris, in a questioning tone, advancing his right foot slightly, and offering it to the other for a trip.

"Of course," said Joe. "The man who is thrown, shall let the other do as he pleases with him. Will you agree to that?"

"To what?"

"If I throw you, you shall turn back, and not follow me longer. If I am thrown, I will go back with you quietly."

"Not I," said Harris. "I want your blood. I am hungry. I mean to kill and eat you. I hate all whigs and I hate you most of all. I will kill you, and then Indian Jim shall die, for I will never leave off following him."

"Have it your own way," said Joe, making a feint at him with his left foot and tripping with his right so quickly that Harris staggered and only recovered himself by the utmost exertion of his powerful muscle. This made him more wary; he played cautiously, and began to fear that he had reckoned without his host. For full ten minutes they stood locked in a

hostile embrace, but the force of Harris was failing, while Joe, to all appearances, was as fresh as ever. "I'll have you now!" the scout shouted.

As the words passed his lips, Joe shot out his left foot, and planted it firmly, and before Harris could do any thing, threw him over the hip upon the crown of the head, with such force that he was deprived of consciousness. Joe grasped his opponent's rifle, which he had thrown upon the ground, and raised it to beat out his brains. Twice he lowered it, and then the consciousness that this would have been his fate if he had fallen into the fellow's hands would prompt him to strike again; but murder it would have been, he thought; so he lowered the weapon, gagged the fellow, and then tied his hands firmly, so that when he recovered he could give no alarm nor do any harm. He left his legs free, that he could make his way back again. This done, he took his rifle and ammunition and again commenced his flight, and kept on his perilous way, through places where the sun never shone, until he came to a spot where a bayou ran dark and sluggish among the ferns. It was a wild place, such a one as Marion would have chosen for a hiding-place from the legions of Tarleton. Huge old trees stretched their limbs overhead, and though it was broad daylight outside, Joe Barnes walked in darkness. Behind him, now near, then far off, the whoops of his pursuers sounded. On the edge of the bayou Joe paused in some uncertainty, until he caught sight of a log extending across the stream, the very one upon which the girls had crossed that morning.

Surprised and overjoyed as he was, he did not wake them, for he knew that they would need all the rest that they could get if they ever bore up under the hardships they must endure, if they ever saw their homes again.

Homes! They had none! The torch of the destroyer had passed by and their pleasant place was a dismal ruin! He sat down and watched them while they slept. The rough soldier had been a gentleman, and the sight touched him. These two, nurtured amid all the luxuries of refined southern life, sleeping on the cold earth in the midst of a dreary swamp. After a while he concluded to arouse them, and touched Josie lightly on the shoulder, at the same time covering her mouth

with his hand to prevent her screaming, which she attempted to do in her first alarm; but seeing the face of the scout she began to laugh. By this time Stella was aroused, and was considerably surprised to see the man near, whom they supposed far away.

"You ran the other way," she said.

"The swamp is a queer place," said Joe, with a light laugh. "I have not been thinking of getting to any particular point, but to keep away from the tories, who have pushed me hard."

"Did you know we were here?" said Josie. "Did you find our tracks?"

"Not at all," said Joe; "on the contrary, I had no idea that you had escaped. How did you get away?"

"They all ran after you," said Josie, "forgetting such unimportant persons as we were, and I thought, since they cared no more for us than that, I did not care to stay with them, so I persuaded Stella to run away, which we did, and for that reason you see us here."

"Our friends are making considerable noise over our escape," said Joe, directing attention to the shouts of the tories. "It seems to me that they are coming nearer; I hope they will not find us out; if they do, I will try to sell my life dearly. I shall not be taken again, if I can help it, for I know that my fate is sealed. Hark!"

The shouts of their pursuers came closer. The eyes of the scout brightened, and he grasped his weapon more firmly and was ready for battle. Stella's cheek grew pale, but Josie did not think of fear, so much was she occupied by the brave bearing of the scout.

"I wish I had a weapon," she said. "I would help you."

"What would you do?" he said, smiling. "No, no; keep back, I beg you. Put the trees between you and the birds which will be flying thickly soon. There is but one way for them to enter this place; I will defend that pass while I remain. They are coming; I think they have followed your trail. Was any one on the island when you came away?"

"Nobody but the Justice."

"Then he gave the alarm and recalled some of the tories, and they were soon upon your trail. I am sorry for this. Keep back; I will make this log a bloody path to those who try to pass it."

"You shall not risk your life for us," said Josie; "you are too brave and good; your life is of too much service to your country. Take to the swamp; you may yet escape."

"It is not my way," said Joe; "let me do my work as it comes to my hands. They are here. Get behind the trees and lie down. One of these fellows donated me his weapon; it will come into play."

They heard hasty steps in the bushes on the other side of the bayou, and the voice of Dacy said,

"They have crossed this log; come on."

He had advanced several feet and was pressing forward, when Joe raised his rifle. Just as his finger was getting heavy on the trigger a thought struck him, and making a motion to the girls to be quiet, he stepped close to the end of the log half-concealed by the bushes. The moment the head of the tory leader appeared he received a stunning blow which would have felled an ox. At the same moment the scout raised his weapon, and fired it among the tories who were crowding along the log, crying out as he did so,

"Keep back, or Dacy is a dead man!"

Taken by surprise, for these men had been recalled by the Justice for the pursuit of the girls, and did not know that the scout was here, they retreated hastily and began a parley. One of their number had been killed and another severely wounded by the shot, and had fallen, half in and half out of the water.

"One of our men is wounded," said the spokesman of the party. "Let us lift him out of the water."

"I shall not hinder you," said the scout, "but bear this in mind. My foot is on the breast of Lionel Dacy, and the moment I see one of you try to raise a weapon, or put a foot upon the log, I will kill him. You know me, and I am a man likely to keep my word."

Dacy recovered his senses, and looked up to see who had struck him down, and saw the bronzed face of Joe Barnes

bending over him. "Keep quiet," said Joe. "I would not willingly do you an injury, but if you try to rise, you blood be upon your own head, for I will kill you as I would a dog."

"Let me rise," said Dacy, his eyes starting from his head with anger. "I will teach you to put your foot upon a southern gentleman. Hanging! It will be nothing to the fate which I will give you if you fall into my hands."

"I shall endeavor not to fall into your hands," said the scout. "For the present you are in *mine*. Miss Josie, will you come here a moment?"

She came forward at his request. "Take the pistols from his belt," he said.

Josie stooped and took away his weapons. Joe cocked one of them, and placed it in her hand again.

"Kneel down by him so that you can not miss," he said, "and if he attempts to stir while I am taking off his belts, do you think you would have courage enough to fire?"

"Let him try me," said the brave girl, her eyes flashing. "I have forgotten that any of the blood of my family runs in his veins."

"You would not shoot me, Josie," he gasped. "Be careful. You don't understand the weapon; it might go off."

"It *will* go off, if you do not keep quiet. My honor is dearer to me than my own life, and it surely ought to be dearer to *me* than *yours*."

"My dear girl," he said in a wheedling tone, "you were well treated while in my camp. I hope you do not suppose I would offer you any indignity. On the contrary—"

"Be quiet!" said Josie, menacing him with the pistol, while the scout was taking off his sword-belt.

"But turn the pistol a little out of the line. A woman does not understand the use of the weapon."

"You are traducing my character. I can shoot, and shoot *straight*, as you will find if you tempt me to pull the trigger. I do not wish to hear you speak."

The scout worked rapidly, and by this time had bound his hand and foot. This done, he rolled him up against a tree as if he had been a log of wood, warning the trees to keep back at the same time. Dacy had become silent, but the same expression which had crossed his face when he was taken

prisoner at Robinson's, passed over it now. Josie, who knew his nature, feared what might happen to them if they were ever so unfortunate as to fall into his hands.

"What do you mean to do with me?" he asked, sullenly.

"I mean to treat through you for a safe escort from the swamps."

"I will never submit."

"You must. There is no other way. Your person will be our safeguard. I demand that you call your lieutenant here, if he is with your men, and order him to draw off your hounds and allow us to leave the swamp."

The tory considered a moment and then assented. At a call from him, his first lieutenant came into the island, while Joe stood with the rifle poised, ready to shoot him at a moment's warning. The lieutenant was ill at ease, for he did not like the look of the scout's face.

"You will please listen to my terms," he said. "You must allow me to leave the swamp in safety with these young ladies, to whom no indignity shall be offered."

"Do you agree with these terms, Dacy?" asked the lieutenant, looking at the prostrate form of the tory captain.

"I must confer with my officer first. Do you give me leave?" he said.

"Certainly," said Joe. "Confer as much as you please. As the result of your deliberations must be made known to me in the end, it would be affectation in me to retire."

"You will have your own way," said the tory, angrily. "Be it so, then. Draw off the men and return to the island. I myself will guard these friends of mine in the exit from the swamp. I hope we may meet friends on the other side."

A glance of peculiar meaning passed between the two, and the tory lieutenant turned to go away. At that moment, Dacy called to Joe, and he turned his head. The movement was fatal to him, for the lieutenant turned with marvelous quickness and struck him down! Josie screamed, and fired the pistol at the head of the traitor with such good aim, that a lock of hair was cut from his temple.

The next movement of Brierly after striking Joe, was to whistle for his men, and they came into the cover, shouting with joy as they saw the scout stretched upon the sod.

"Bind him!" cried the lieutenant. "Now girl, out of my way. If your aim were as good as your will I should be a dead man. I will repay you good for evil. When Dacy takes a wife, I too will enter on the married state. How do you like the idea?"

Josie only answered by a look of the deepest scorn. They raised the prostrate scout and made him walk, though the blood was streaming from a cut in his forehead. Early in the afternoon, he was again in his former prison. Dacy was with the party all the time, but had not spoken a word. Half an hour after the entrance, Dacy came in with his officers, and took up matters just where they had left off at the sudden exodus of the scout.

"We have agreed that you shall still have a trial," said Dacy.

"I said before," said the scout, quietly, "that I will not assist you in this farce. I know my fate, and have no hope or mercy at your hands. I might as well look for pity in the breast of a starved tiger in the jungles of Bengal. When I took upon myself the vocation of a spy, I took its risks and its penalties. I am a spy, and I do not deny that you have the right to sentence me."

"It will not be necessary to call witnesses, then, since you confess to being a spy. Now, Brierly, what is your decision?"

"He has confessed, and the penalty is death by hanging."

"What do you say, Arundel?"

The second lieutenant was a character. He was the son of one of the richest planters in that section, but from bad company, and too much bad whisky, had ruined his constitution. Character he had none. At the present time, he was in a state of beastly intoxication, for he was constitutionally lazy, and when the justice gave the alarm, and called the troops back to pursue the girls, he had remained upon the island and committed fearful ravages upon a demijohn of whisky which Dacy had in his quarters, in company with the convicted justice, who was now dead-drunk in the cabin. The appearance of Dacy, whom he feared above all things, had sobered the fellow for a time. During the questioning and answers on the part of the other, he had stood near the door, holding

by the casing, regarding the proceedings with a look of drunken gravity. In some way, he had formed the opinion that he was being tried for his life.

"What is your decision, fool?" said Dacy, scandalized by the bad behavior of his subordinate. "I asked you a question."

"Did, eh?"

"What have you to say on this point?"

This appeal convinced him that he was right in his first idea.

"I hain't done any thing, have I? Don't make so much fuss about a little whisky. I'm all right; there ain't any thing the matter with me."

"Do you know what you are here for?"

"It's a trial, ain't it?" said Arundel.

"Yes."

Embolished by this knowledge, he staggered away from the door, and thrusting out one hand in a graceful gesture, he broke into a sudden frenzy of oratory.

"I have nothing to say why sentence of death ought not to be passed on me according to law."

"Well, you blamed idiot, what do you mean?"

"Why, you're a-trying me, ain't ye?"

"You are drunk, sir!"

"No, I ain't. I'm a good boy, I am; I always mind my mother, I do. An' my mother said to me once, 'Lewis, my boy,' says she, 'don't drink, Lewis; and don't you swear Lewis. Now, mind I tell you.'"

"Get out of this."

"That young man is drunk," he continued, pointing to Joe. "That's what makes him spin round so. Look (hic) here feller—want to give you little bit of 'vice. Don't never (hic) drink, young (hic) feller; an' don't swear, 'cause—'cause—it's—it's beastly vulgar, so it is!"

Dacy rose in a rage, collared his drunken subordinate, and led him from the room. He was not long gone.

"A competent court-martial!" sneered the scout.

Dacy rewarded him with a malevolent glance, and said,

"You will be taken from this place in an hour, and hanged

by the neck until you are dead. That is long enough to prepare. Come, Brierly; leave him to himself."

The two passed out, and the condemned man was alone. It had come at last, and an hour only stood between him and his doom. The brave soldier sat awhile with bended head, and then, bending his knee, he sent a prayer to his mother's God, to give him strength to meet death like a man.

CHAPTER X.

"ON, STANLEY, ON!"

DACY, upon leaving the condemned man, knocked at the door of the other hut and was admitted. His face was fixed in a sullen resolve, and he sat on one of the rude benches near the door for some moments without speaking. All at once, he looked up quickly, and said,

"Joseph Barnes dies in an hour."

"Dies!" gasped Josie, almost in a whisper, turning her white face toward him. "Do you mean to murder him?"

"Nothing of the kind, my dear cousin. He has been tried by a drum-head court-martial this day, and condemned to death. I have given him an hour to prepare."

"He has done nothing. He came to save us."

"He killed three of my men, at first, and two in this last bout."

"Your men attacked him first."

"You are are not much used to the ways of the world, Josie. Why, the fellow himself, who is no fool, knows what to expect. He will die game, unless I were to give him a chance to escape."

"Oh, will you?—will you?" cried Stella, clasping her hands.

"Yes, upon conditions."

"What conditions? Oh, I will do any thing rather than let that brave man die. What do you require?"

"In the first place, that you give me your sacred promise"

to marry me, and in the next, that Josie promises to marry my lieutenant, Brierly, who has taken quite a fancy to her."

Both recoiled from the tempter with a shriek of horror.

"No, no," cried Josie, "not that; you ask that which is impossible. I do not even know the man you speak of. I only saw him to-day."

"You refuse?"

"That I yes. Oh, yes."

He left them without another word. They could hear outside the sound of busy preparation. The hour was nearly gone. It passed, and he came again into the door of the cabin.

"You must come out," he cried, sternly. "I have determined that you shall look upon his death."

"Spare us!" sobbed Josie, sinking on her knees. "Is it not enough that you rob him of his life, and must we see him die? Oh, spare us—spare him! Let him go free. He has sinned against your law, but show mercy, as *you hope* for mercy; do not let him die!"

"Girl! girl! you plead in vain. I have sworn that this man must die, and die he *shall*!"

"Must we go out now?"

"Yes. Do not delay. I long for the end of my vengeance."

Seizing a wrist of each of the girls, he almost dragged them out into the light. They saw a rope thrown over the bough of a great tree, with the fatal noose at one end. The other was wound about the body of the tree. The prisoner had not yet come forth, but half a dozen men were just entering the hut. Soon they reappeared, leading him between them. He had prepared himself for death, and his step was as proud as that of Caractacus before Claudius. He thought now that it was noble to die for country, even though a shameful death. Truly, with such men,

"'Tis easy to be brave for truth
As for the rose to blow."

His cheek did not blanch, as he saw the preparations for

his death. But when his eyes rested on the faces of the two held by Dacy, for a moment his strong manhood forsook him, and he reeled among his guards. I think he was longing to speak to Josie, now that death was near; but he would not ask it.

"I give you ten minutes to bid good-by to your friends," said Dacy, thrusting them forward as he spoke. "Be brief."

It did not take long to part with Stella. A hearty hand clasp, a prayer for her safety and happiness, and she turned aside weeping. Then he took both of Josie's little hands in his, and, regardless of the sneering looks of those around, in low tones, he told her what was in his heart.

"I do not think I should dare to tell you this, except that I am near to death. These three days a new feeling has grown up in my heart. I love you, and yet I scarcely know your name. I love you, and I tell it now, looking on my death. If you are not pleased with this, tell me, and I will say no more."

She could not speak, but her eyes told him all he wished to know.

"It is hard to part, darling, just when we know that we love each other. Don't grieve too much, and think of me sometimes when I have gone to rest. My enemies grow impatient, and it is needless to prolong this agony. Kiss me once, dear; again. Never forget me; and tell to your friends in after time, that I died as a brave man, for the country of my love. Don't give way now. Take her, Dacy, and as you deal with her, God do so to you!"

Dacy took her into his arms, with a face almost as white as her own. He was not wholly depraved.

"Take her away," repeated the young scout. "It is not right that they should look upon my death."

"They shall not go," said he, sullenly. "I have sworn that they shall see it. If you have any thing more to say, Joseph Barnes, say it quickly, for your time is almost done."

"I have nothing to say. I have prayed to my mother's God, and am ready to die. Only this, Lionel Dacy, let those poor girls go free when I am dead. Now, then, I am ready."

The rope was adjusted about his neck, and they waited only Dacy's signal. Then both the girls flung themselves at his feet, and clasped his knees.

"Save him, save him!" they shrieked.

"Do you promise to be my wife?"

"Give me such promise, Miss Stella. It will not influence my fate. Even he has not the power to save me from these hands."

"When I drop the handkerchief," said Dacy, "up with him. It is time he died."

The eyes of the hangmen were upon him. They saw the handkerchief lifted in the air, and then, as it fluttered slowly down, came the voice of the scout.

"Friends and foes, good-by!"

The handkerchief fell, and half a dozen strong arms were tugging at the rope.

A yell—the war-cry of the Choctaws—rang in their ears, and the Indian sprung into their midst, cut the rope that bound his friend, and put arms in his hands. The enemy closed about them with mingled cries of rage and exultation.

"It is better thus," shouted Barnes. "I will die with arms in my hands."

"No die," returned the Indian, striking down a man who was pressing him hard. "Hear the war-cry of the captain's men!"

From every point about the island a hoarse, prolonged cry was indeed rising. The band fell back from the fatal tree, and looked about them in dismay. Sabers gleamed through the trees on every side, and, as the carbines began to play upon them, they fell back to the cover of the huts. Stanley was at hand with the rough riders of Sumter. A rat, cornered, will turn upon his enemy and fight to the death—mouse will snap at the fingers which would drag it from the trap, and so Dacy's Lambs, when they saw no way of escape, took arms and fought like men for their lives.

"Put the girls into the hut," shouted Dacy, "and let the victors have them."

He was obeyed, and the two cowered down upon their hard couch, and listened to the sound of the combat. The volatile Josie could not stay there. She had seen her lover saved

from a horrible death, and now she feared he might fall in the battle. She rose and looked from the window, and saw that the Lambs were forming hastily on the center of the island. Then came a loud command from the bushes on the edge, and a body of dismounted cavalry, with their rifles on a trail, dashed out into the opening. At the sight of the scout, standing unharmed by the side of the Indian, they raised a shout of joy. He ran quickly along the verge of the island until he took his place in the line. The Indian did the same, and the party prepared to charge.

"I see Stanley," said Josie, in a low tone, for the benefit of Stella, who had not raised her head. "He leads the men of Sumter."

Stella sprang up immediately and stood by Josie at the window. She had lost fear now; her lover was in danger. She saw the brave fellow leading his men to the charge. A rifle cracked, (it was fired by Dacy), and he staggered. But recovering himself, he pointed onward with his sword.

The Lambs fought well, but they were outnumbered and surprised, and had not the consciousness of right to sustain them, which nerved the arms of the whigs. Most of these had some injury to remember which had been done to them by the tories. The sword of Stanley, the rifle of Joe Barnes, and the gleaming hatchet of Jim Lane were fearfully busy. They pressed the enemy back, foot by foot, losing few men themselves. Through all, some fate separated Dacy and Stanley, though each struggled desperately to get near the other. Joe Barnes, remembering his injuries, was seeking the tory. Jim Lane, thinking of Robinson's house, also sought him. Step by step the tories retreated, losing men all the time, while these three men pushed forward with the same purpose. Suddenly Dacy disappeared in the direction of the cabin.

"He has fled!" said Brierly, throwing down his sword. "Quarter."

"It is granted," cried Stanley. "Lieutenant, see to the prisoners; Barnes, with me!"

But, Joe Barnes was gone already in the direction of the cabin, and Stanley followed him. As he approached the cabin a pistol cracked. Dacy, completely crazed by the triumph of Stanley, had entered the cabin with a drawn knife

and raised it above the breast of Stella. Just then the scout appeared in the doorway and fired his pistol, at the hazard of hitting Stella. Any one else would have hesitated, but, lightning was not quicker than the flash of the pistol. When Stanley entered, he saw the tory reeling up and down, grasping at the breast of his green coat, through which the pistol-ball had entered, and striving blindly all the time with mad eagerness, to grasp Stella, who had escaped from his hands. But his strength forsook him, and he sunk down, at the feet of the girl he had so loved and injured in his time.

In an instant, Josie remembered that he was her cousin, and begged them to raise him, and lay him on the bed; but before they could touch him, the bold heart throbbed no longer. Lionel Dacy was dead.

"I am sorry that I had to do it," said Joe, taking Josie's hand in his. "He was your cousin. But it was to save her life. He was mad."

In him Jim looked solemnly on the dead body of the tory. A strange expression passed over his face.

"Bad heart," he said, at last. "Better be dead; no more burn house; no more hurt white squaw."

"You have to thank that brave fellow for saving your life, Barnes," said Stanley. "He gave the general no rest until he sent me out, and he led us safe to the place. Just in time for you, old boy."

"Jim Lane is frien' to Joe," said the Indian, calmly. "If frien', how can let him die an' do nottin' to save him? Dat no good."

"We must leave you now," said Stanley. "I pray you remain within the cabin. Such a scene as that yonder is not for you to look at. We will come for you when we are ready to go."

With these words they went out into the open air. But few of the Lamps survived. Their bodies were thickly strewn about the level ground which they had so stubbornly defended. A working party was detailed, who buried the dead on both sides. When all was done the partisans prepared to ride back. The horses which had brought the girls to the island were found, when the two ladies were mounted and joined the

troop. As they prepared to start, Jim Lane appeared, dragging by the collar the Justice, who had kept his cowardly body hidden during the battle.

"See dis," said Jim. "Who 'e be?"

"That is the person whom Dacy brought to the island to marry him to Miss Stella," said Joe. "I think we had better give him a good hiding."

"Sir," said the Justice, "you are insolent."

"Sir," said Joe, "you would do well to keep a civil tongue in your head, or you may chance to lose that useful organ. You are one of those cowardly hounds who take the protections of the British for the sake of a filthy office. And it is known to us that you agreed to be the tool of Dacy in this great injustice, for *money*."

"You have been misinformed," stammered the Justice. "I am sure you did not have the truth told you."

"I heard you myself," said Arundel, who was now sober.

"That fellow is drunk," said the Justice. "I am not a tory. I am as good a whig as you will find in the Catawba country, while you are known as nothing better than a drunken tory."

Arundel, who had not lost all self-respect, stooped in his saddle, and struck the fellow in the face, which only drew from him a fresh torrent of vituperation.

"Be quiet, both of you," cried the captain. "You, Mr. Justice, may consider yourself a prisoner, and it is my opinion, that if Sumter can find any pretext for hanging you, he will do so. Orderly, take charge of the prisoners. Lieutenant, take the men on, and if you get out before us, wait for us at the clearing. Detach ten men to guard the prisoners, and ten more to take care of the horses, which will be a good deal to Sumter, so soon after the battle at Blackstocks. Sound bugles. Boot and saddle."

They fell in to this order. The larger portion of the men were under the care of the lieutenant, riding in front; Stanley and Stella followed; the prisoners, under charge of a corporal, with Joe Barnes and Josie, came next; then the red horses taken, which were fastened together in groups of six, by means of lariats. For a while all were silent; but when they

get into the more open country, Joe spoke to his companion.

"I have been thinking where you could go," said he. "The hand of the destroyer has been laid on the house of Mr. Robinson, and that is no longer open for you. Have you thought what you would do?"

"My father's sister is a widow, living on Broad River, and I shall go to her," said Josie.

"And Miss Stella?"

"She will go with me."

"I have no home to offer you now," he said, with a little touch of sadness in his tone. "And, indeed, I have no right to take advantage of what you said to me when I was in my last strait."

"Do you wish to withdraw what you said then?" she asked, slyly.

"Wish it!" he said, reproachfully. "You do not know me."

"Then, do not talk about it. For the present, you are one of Sumter's men. I am not weak, or unpatriotic enough to take you from the service of the country now, when she needs all her bravest sons. Do your duty like a man, and when the war is over, come to me when Stanley comes for Stella, and if you have not forgotten what you said to-day, I will try to remember what I said as well."

Stanley sent his orderly with ten men to escort the ladies to the house of their relation. Jim Lane went with him. They reached the house safely, and then parted.

We will not follow the two partisans and their loved ones through the varying scenes of those eventful years which followed the destruction of Dacy's Landing. The girls lived quietly with their aunt upon Broad River until the news of the fall of Yorktown came. That brought their lovers home. Joe came back with a captain's uniform, still accompanied by the faithful Indian, who would not be parted from him. Stanley was a colonel. They were all poor enough as regards money, but they had strong arms and good plantations, and three months afterwards Joe took a wife home to a new house he had built upon the site of his ruined old homestead.

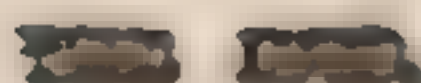
At the same time, Stanley and Stella were married. Mr.

Robinson escaped the perils of war, and built up another mansion in the place of the one which Dacy had destroyed, and called his son and daughter to come and stay with him in his old age. Jim Lane always remained with his former comrade in danger. And when he died at a ripe old age, they gave him a grave in the family burial-ground, and inscribed on the stone:

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